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SURVEYS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

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MCMXIX.

SURVEYS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

BY THE LATE

P. HUME BROWN, F.B.A., LL.D.

HISTORIOGRAPHER ROYAL FOR SCOTLAND AND PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT SCOTTISH HISTORY
AND PALAEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
VISCOUNT HALDANE, O.M.

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INTRODUCTION

THE death of Professor Hume Brown is a real loss to the public. He was no orator ; he disliked rhetoric ; in what he wrote there were few epigrams or striking phrases. But he exercised at short range a deep influence on those with whom he came in contact, and that influence was a lasting and permeating one. It was due partly to a personality highly refined by constant reflection, and partly to the sense he gave, not only of great and exact knowledge of his own subjects, but of a background in which they were set for him.

The Essays to which I am writing a few words of preface are typical of his detached outlook. Whether he was discussing the general method which the historian ought to employ, or whether he was estimating with judicial calmness the services to their country in the days gone by of the Scottish nobles, there is the same characteristic tone as we are conscious of in his *History of Scotland* and in his earlier volumes on Buchanan and Knox. The author is always suggesting to us that there is a larger scheme of life than that immediately under consideration, a harmony in reference to which men and their affairs must be estimated.

No one had better opportunities than I was privileged to possess of watching the growth of the sense of that harmony in his mind. His studies were literary rather than philosophical,

but the literature he loved was prose and poetry of the reflective order. Of these his knowledge was wide. He read constantly and closely, not only the great writers in his own language, but those whose utterances were in German, in French, in Italian and in Latin. During the forty years of an intimate companionship I observed that his outlook was growing under this copious stimulation. More than by any other he was influenced by Goethe. He knew him thoroughly, and never suspended the effort to absorb his teaching. He and I used for many years to go regularly for some time to places such as Weimar, Ilmenau, Wetzlar, and Göttingen to gather materials for a book on which he was engaged during the last period of his life, a work on which he had concentrated his passion for excellence more closely even than on his *History of Scotland*. This was a new life of Goethe. It was practically completed when he died, and it may be hoped that it will see the light. For it is a work of high literary scholarship, and of sympathetic interpretation of him whom the author looked upon as the greatest critic of life since Aristotle.

The personal charm of Hume Brown lay most obviously in his conversation. It had a quality peculiar to itself. It was the outcome of far-reaching latent knowledge, and of a power to bring what was appropriate to immediate use. This power had become developed by close and constant reading in the fields not only of history but of general literature. He was essentially a professional in his mode of study and no dabbler. He would sample a book and lay it aside if it did not meet his purpose, but, if it did promise to him what he was in search of, his method was to go over it again and again and to make careful notes. Everything he did was done deliberately and thoroughly. He was never commonplace either in writing or

in talk, and the result was that one could not tire of his conversation, or feel that the subject had become exhausted.

His life was normally a solitary one, and conducted with a regularity that rivalled that of Kant. At certain hours he took walks, mostly solitary excepting for the company of a dog. Perhaps it was his regularity in taking them out, as much as his liking for them, that was the reason, but anyhow the dogs he got to know became at once devoted to him. I mention this particular attraction of his personality because I think it bears on its more general attractiveness. The quiet self-possessed scholar was welcome wherever he went. In a household servants, fellow guests, all the inmates, quickly came to hold him in affectionate personal esteem. I do not remember his ever making an enemy, and even in his work he had very few critics. That was because of the objective and impartial quality of his mind, and his freedom from narrowness. He had no illusions about either himself or others.

In public affairs he took a deep if detached interest. About the outcome of the great war he never had the slightest doubt. 'We historians,' he used to say to me, 'can judge consequences better than politicians who look at events from too near.' Germany, he thought, had departed from the large views of her old leaders of opinion, such as Goethe, and was paying the penalty for this. The recent literature of Germany he did not rate high, but he set very great value on her classical period, that of the first half of the nineteenth century, and of the prose and poetry of this period he had the knowledge of a devoted scholar.

In the last two years of his life—he was sixty-eight when the end came—I think he had a sense of failing physical strength. He was anxious to complete the work he had in hand, and he

applied himself to it without rest, if without haste. Nothing was too unimportant to be verified thoroughly. For days he would see no one, but devoted himself to the sheer occupation of producing. The result was a steady and unbroken output. When he came, as he did very regularly, to see me, he always brought with him a pile of typewritten material to be read and discussed. I shall never forget those quiet walks in which he used to pour out the accumulation of his reflections since we had last met.

A distinguishing quality in Hume Brown's writing was, not only its large outlook, but its sureness. His confidence in his conclusions was born of patient and untiring industry in getting his facts from the original sources. Anyone who wishes to realise the effect of this quality on his style has only to turn to his two essays in the present volume on 'The Régime of the Later Stewarts in Scotland' and 'The Union of the Parliaments of England and Scotland, 1707.' These show everywhere the traces of the extensive work he had done in disentangling and editing the records of the Scots Privy Council. No historian had equipped himself better for his task than had the author when he entered on his estimate of the governments of James VI., Charles I., Charles II. and James VII. The Union was for him an inevitable consequence of the failure of these governments. It recorded the abandonment by the Scottish nation of submission to rule based on theocratic principles. No longer dominated by theological preoccupations, that nation became free to develop itself. Religion was still to play a great part in the national life, but under a new form. In the words of Professor Hume Brown, 'the pre-eminent cause, the fundamental condition of the Parliamentary Union was that common Protestantism which bound

the two kingdoms to present a united front against Rome and the Catholic Powers.'

The Professor's habit of mind was that which can grow up only in a university atmosphere. He was always anxious not to become onesided. He balanced his German studies carefully by extensive reading of the great French writers. With Montaigne and Renan he was deeply familiar, but I think the French author who held him most closely was Sainte-Beuve. To his pages he was constantly turning for stimulation. He preferred his criticisms to those of any other, although he held the critical opinions of Matthew Arnold in high esteem.

It has rarely been my good fortune to come across a man who had equipped himself so perfectly by resolute self-discipline for the work to which he had set his hand as had the author of these Essays.

HALDANE.

METHODS OF WRITING HISTORY

EVERY student of Scottish history is familiar with that goodly array of crimson-bound volumes in which the late Sir William Fraser has related the fortunes of divers of the great historic families of Scotland. The very titles of these volumes—the books of Carluverock, Menteith, Lennox, Douglas, Annandale, and the rest—are like master-words to recall the most tragic, the most picturesque, the most momentous passages of the national history. To have produced such a body of enduring work would itself establish a solid claim on the gratitude of one's countrymen. But Sir William Fraser put the seal to his labours by an action which will for ever associate his name with the subject that was the main interest of his life. By founding a Chair for the special study of Scottish History in the University of Edinburgh he once for all gave it a place among the higher studies of his countrymen.

It can hardly be considered a revolutionary step to have given a place in the metropolitan University to the study of the national history. Even the 'decadent nations' have long made provision in their universities for the special cultivation of their own history and language and literature. Universities themselves, it is to be remembered, are the product of that very national life which it is the business of the historian to trace to its sources, and to describe in its essential characteristics. If it were no more than as the interpreter of their own being, the subject of national history may claim an indefeasible right to a modest place in the universities of every nation. Moreover, it may fairly be maintained that the history of one's own country possesses specific advantages for the training

of the historical student. It was the maxim of a famous critic that no one can speak with security of any literature but his own, and if this be true of literature, it is at least equally true of history. In all of us there is the deposited impression of the national evolution of which we are the individual products, and it is precisely this impression that enables us to interpret the events and the characters of the nation to which we each belong. It is only the members of the household who understand the varying expressions and tones and gestures of each other, which mean so much to them but are imperceptible even to the most intimate friend. It is certain that the history of any people can never be learned from books alone. Facts may be stated with perfect accuracy; the chain of cause and effect in the national development may be expounded with absolute clearness and precision; yet the informing spirit which produced the nation's ideals may wholly have eluded what may be a mere mechanical process. It is hardly too much to say, indeed, that half, and perhaps the better half, of our knowledge of our national history is unconsciously learnt; and that it is by this unconscious knowledge that we interpret what we deliberately acquire.

By the conditions which Sir William Fraser attached to his foundation he certainly meant that the history of his native country should be studied according to all the latest lights. His directions were that Scottish history should be treated in connection with the histories of other countries, and that it should be studied with special reference to palæography. In these two conditions are implied the whole *rationale* of modern historical science.

There is no period of Scottish history which does not at some point touch the history of some other country. The first authentic fact recorded in the national annals is the invasion of Julius Agricola in the year 81 A.D.; and in connection with that event the question inevitably rises—how did Agricola come to find himself in North Britain at that parti-

cular moment of time ? To answer the question, it is necessary to consider the gradual extension of the Roman Empire from the day that Julius Cæsar began that conquest of Gaul which directly led to the conquest of Britain. The coming of St. Columba about the year 563 may be said to mark the real beginning of the national history. But to understand the significance of this fact we must again go beyond the limits of Scotland. It was from Ireland that Columba brought the religion which for a century and a half was the chief moulding force in the evolution of North Britain. To Irish history, therefore, we must go for the sources of that civilisation of which Columba was the great apostle. Again, the reign of David I. is perhaps the most important in Scottish history, as it was mainly by his endeavours that Church and State took the form which they retained through the Middle Age and beyond it. But the work of David was purely imitative, and it can be understood only by reference to the developments of the other countries of Christendom. In the case of later national events it is hardly necessary to point out that they can receive no adequate treatment without the constant application of the comparative method. One more illustration, however, may be taken. But for Luther and Calvin there would have been no Reformation in Scotland. No account of the Scottish Reformation, therefore, can be satisfactory which does not take into consideration the work of Luther and Calvin as it directly and indirectly bore on the work of John Knox and Andrew Melville.

But, if the comparative method is indispensable for explaining the growth of institutions and the causes of events, it possesses another value which is of equal importance. In this aspect it is not explanation, but illustration, that is its primary object. Suppose the historian chooses a special period for his treatment. He may give the most admirable description of its events, of its laws, customs, and manners ; but, except he indicate the relative conditions of other

countries, his picture is apt to be as uninformative as it is misleading. In the case of Scotland there are periods of which we have come to form serious misconceptions from the neglect to compare them with the contemporary periods in other countries. The ideas generally prevalent regarding the character of the fifteenth century in Scotland afford an example in point. The notions we have formed of that century are derived from chroniclers who had only their own country before their eyes. Scotland during the fifteenth century was certainly not an Arcadia, but it is equally certain that for all its crimes and oppressions it would be easy to find parallels in the contemporary histories of France and Germany. Even the performances of the Wolf of Badenoch are easily left behind by those of many a robber baron of the Rhine.

The second condition on which Sir William Fraser insisted in connection with the study of Scottish history is that that study should be based on direct contact with original sources. The use of primary documents in historical narrative is by no means peculiar to our own time. A considerable portion of John Knox's *History of the Reformation* is made up of first-hand papers connected with the affairs which he describes, and in the interests of truth he himself showed an eager desire to base his narrative on this solid foundation. What is peculiar to our time, however, is the critical handling of original documents with a view to the nearest possible approach to truth. If there be any part of the historian's labours that can be strictly described as science, it is the application of the various apparatus which he now brings to bear on the materials which form the basis of his work. Given the original document, the all-important question to be answered is whether the document is genuine and authentic. To the settlement of this question must go all the resources of palæography and diplomatic. The material of which the document is composed, the ink in which it is written, the form of its every letter—all must be scrutinised to ascertain whether it has the character

of the age to which it is alleged to belong. These mechanical details settled, the phraseology has next to be put to the test. Are the terms in which it is expressed in keeping with the time ; does its drift conflict with ascertained facts—such are some of the questions which must be satisfactorily answered before a document can be accepted as a trustworthy basis for the historian's conclusions. And only, it is to be noted, when a document has passed through such a crucible can it be thoroughly possessed by the person who uses it. He may read the document in impeccable transcript, but its full importance can never be realised except through the direct impression of its original. By contact with this primary draft he takes it in, so to speak, with all his senses, and he seems to sit, as it were, by the scribe who wrote it, and to identify himself for the moment with the time in which it is his endeavour to live. 'With the resources which our archives offer us,' says Taine, 'we almost become the contemporaries of those with whose history we are dealing ; and more than once, as I have sat among them, tracing the ancient handwriting on its mildewed pages, I have almost been tempted to address them aloud.'

But what, it may be asked, is the substance which Scottish history affords for the application of these rigorous methods ? According to Ranke there is in every people, destined to be a nation, an embryonic idea of which its subsequent history is but the necessary and unconscious development. It was thus in the destinies of Greece to give us art, and of Rome to give us law. However this may be, there is indubitable truth in what has been said by another of the world's great historians : no society can be considered a nation except it contribute its own distinctive note to the great chorus of humanity. Tried by this test, Scotland can assuredly lay valid claim to a place among the nations of the earth. Whatever else may be said of Scottish history, it can never be said that it is wanting in distinctiveness. We may look in vain for that orderly development which makes the primary interest

of histories such as those of England and Rome, yet it may be said that Scottish history brings us in contact with primal forces in greater degree than either. We cannot follow its course without being impressed by two characteristics which have distinguished it throughout. The one is the extraordinary part that has been played by religion; the other, the excessive play of individual life and character.

At every turning-point of the history of the Scottish people, religion has been the main impelling force. It was religion that inspired the work of St. Columba, and created conditions which made possible a united kingdom within the limits of modern Scotland. Similarly it was religion that was the animating motive of the sons of the Saxon Margaret in their work of transforming Celtic Scotland into a feudal kingdom and an organic part of Roman Christendom; and it was also a religious revolution that in the sixteenth century undid their work and launched the nation on other seas. During the century and a half that followed the Reformation, the history of Scotland is but the history of a dilemma created by two terrible antinomies. On the one hand, the new church, supported by the mass of the people, maintained that it possessed divinely attested credentials to the creed and polity which it had adopted as its own. On the other hand, the Stewart kings held with equal fervour of conviction that they were the vicegerents of heaven, and that Presbyterianism was incompatible with such a delegation. On both sides it was a religious dogma that was the root of the great controversy, and it was only through the gradual growth of the secular spirit that the controversy was finally closed by the Revolution of 1689.

Of the rampant individualism in Scottish history every page is full. Scottish history for many people, indeed, consists of the biographies of prominent personages with whom are identified the events of their time. And what is noteworthy is that these personages are not historical characters in the

ordinary sense: they are the incarnation of different tendencies and ideals which will never cease to evoke passion and prejudice so long as the Scottish people retains its distinctive character. The very names of the outstanding characters in Scottish history arouse as much lively feeling as the names of contemporary politicians.

This exaggerated individualism in the national history has reacted on those who have undertaken to write it. If there is one quality which has distinguished Scottish historians as a class, it is their zeal. Into the remotest and driest problems they carry that perfervid temper which has been said to distinguish the nation. Of one distinguished antiquary it was said that he would rather go to the scaffold than write the word *Scottish* with two *t*'s; of another that he wrote so intemperately on the subject of the Picts and Scots that it was easy to see to which race he himself belonged.

The mention of this quality of zeal in Scottish historians, raises the interesting question as to what should be regarded as the true historic temper, and what the historian's primary aim in his treatment of the past. The question is doubtless one which does not admit of a definite answer, but the mere attempt to discuss it brings its own instruction.

"There are twenty ways of writing history," says a historian who was a consummate master of one of them. But of late it has been claimed for one of these ways that it is the only true way, and it calls itself specifically the *historic method*. By the advocates of this method it is maintained that one of the achievements of the last century was that it gradually substituted the historic for the dogmatic method in all studies that relate to the human spirit. It was the peculiarity of the dogmatic historian that he addressed himself to his task with an equipment of categories which he applied to every person, event, or series of events, with which he had to deal. He had a definite religious creed, and a definite political creed which he applied to all ages with as undoubting

confidence as to his nearest neighbours. It was his duty to his church or his party or his school that he should judge men and things by the standard of that system of beliefs with which he was himself identified. The criticism thus applied might be broader or narrower, and the historian might apply it with varying knowledge and insight, but in every narrative, exposition, and judgment, this criterion was consciously or unconsciously present.

On the other hand, the historic method proceeds on a totally different principle. He who adopts it makes but one postulate as the ground of his procedure. It must be granted to him that in human affairs there is a sequence, a connection, a concatenation which is the product of cause and effect, and is intelligible through his individual consciousness. If he imports into this sequence any theory of final causes, he presents us with a dogmatic construction of history—not a construction consistent with the historic method. Such terms as providence, evolution, social organism, and the like, he must equally eschew, for in all of them is involved a theory which may or may not be true, but with which, as a historian, he is bound to have no concern.

His postulate granted, it is the one duty incumbent on him to trace the action and interaction of cause and effect which has produced the tissue of human history. Let us suppose him to have selected a special period of that history for treatment, how will he proceed? It is his governing idea that the persons or events whose history it is his object to present make part of a whole coextensive with the epoch to which they belong. Of this whole it lies with himself to fix on those elements that bear most closely on his own special subject, and best illustrate and explain the distinctive form it has assumed at the period he has chosen to exhibit. In this process of selection and co-ordination, he has no thought of the ethical superiority of one order of ideas over another. The guiding spirit of his inquiry is purely and simply the explanation, the illustration

of the characters and events whose history he wishes to relate.

It will be seen that an essential characteristic of the historic method is that it is absolutely non-moral. Its sole concern is with the forces that impel humanity in those incessant changes and modifications that compose its history, and it estimates these forces simply according to their importance in effecting revolutions in human society. Thus, if the historian has to deal with such an event as the great schism from Rome in the sixteenth century, it is beside his purpose to prove the ethical superiority of the one side over the other in the great struggle between Protestantism and mediæval Christianity. His business is to show how it came to pass that certain nations took the side of Luther, while others remained faithful to Rome. In his endeavour to supply an adequate explanation he will, of course, have to deal with events and motives that come within the sphere of ethics and religion, but it is not in virtue of their religious or ethical quality that he appraises them. All that he has to consider is their relative value among the forces that gave meaning and importance to the epoch to which they belong. If he says that the corruption of the mediæval church was in large measure the cause of the religious revolution, he says it, not in the spirit of the moralist who wishes to point a lesson, but in the spirit of the man of science engaged in a problem of dynamics.

To this so-called historic method it may naturally be objected that it is a mere cold-blooded autopsy, the essence of which is the negation of moral distinctions, and the result of which must be the enfeebling of moral impulse. The reply of those who advocate this method is that this objection is really based on a confusion of functions. There is the function of the historian, and there is the function of the moralist and philosopher. The work of the historian is to present the chain, as unbroken as our knowledge will permit, of that sequence

of thought and act which represents the life of man since the beginning. The more impersonal that presentment is, the nearer, it may be supposed, shall we attain to an understanding of what that sequence means. By undue eagerness to import ethical judgments at every point the historian may even vitiate the significance of the whole; and we are not without warning of what has been called "the sophisticating medium of moral uses." On the other hand, if he will but content himself with the accumulation and the presentment of the materials that constitute the problem, he may serve with more effect the moral instincts of humanity. His materials, purified as far as human limitations will permit, he may hand over to those whose vocation is higher than his own, and on the materials thus purified the prophet, the poet, and the philosopher will exercise their divinations and their speculations with a more reasonable certainty of a relatively valuable result.

But there is another objection to the method above described which seems fatal to anything like its adequate application. It would require a recording angel to treat of mortal things with this degree of objectivity. No mortal has such immunity from affection that he will not at one point or another betray the prepossessions of his own mind and temper. 'A man cannot jump off his own shadow.' The vision which he sees is but the reflection of his individual mind. To say, therefore, that the method of treating history just described is the only method, is really, in Emerson's phrase, 'to put one's own whim upon the universe.' By no one method, it may be safely said, can we exhaust 'the fullness of the past.' We have but to recall the greatest efforts that have hitherto been made in the domain of history to realise how far they all come short of an adequate presentment of their themes. Gibbon created the most imposing historical structure of any age or country, yet in the most vital parts of his work it is recognised that he showed a lack of certain of the highest qualities of

the historian. When Gibbon speaks of religion, says Sainte-Beuve, you would think he was a mandarin.

The shortcomings of the great masters of history show that no one method and no one order of gifts are equal to the full comprehension and presentment of the past. To say that one fashion of writing history is to exclude all others is as reasonable as to say that all poets should be of one type, and all poetry of one quality. But to render the various aspects of nature and human life Milton is needed as well as Shakespeare, and Byron as well as Wordsworth. In the very adoption of a special method the limitations of the historian are brought into view; and according as he is didactic or picturesque or philosophic we may anticipate what parts of his subject he will emphasise, in what light he will see them, and what will be the prevailing tone of his work.

Moreover, there must always be a certain type of mind to which anything in the shape of a system is at once repugnant and impossible. To have imposed the historic method on Carlyle would have been to put him in a spiritual strait-jacket. In the case of a writer like Carlyle we have the extreme example of a historian who stamps his image on every page he wrote, and sets aside almost every canon prescribed by the new method. His mode of conceiving and reproducing the past is, in truth, a reversion to the primitive narrative, the one object of which was the dramatic presentment of the dominating figures and events that have determined the destinies of peoples. In history so written it may be said that the personality of the writer inevitably obscures facts, distorts all character, and makes the past a mere background for a magic-lantern illustration. In Carlyle's case, it might be enough to say, as Coleridge said of Milton, that the egotism of such a man is a revelation of the spirit. But it is more important to note that in the extremest form the individualistic method has a reason for existence in human nature itself. There are persons and events that will not yield their secret to the

best efforts of the analytic method ; after all the apparent factors have been detailed—of race, of moment, of environment—the insight which comes of impulse and imagination is needed to penetrate to the heart of the mystery.

It may be safely affirmed, therefore, that the so-called historic method cannot, in the nature of things, displace every other. To certain types of mind, genuinely interested in the past, it will always be alien and repulsive. In itself, moreover, it is no perfect organon equal to a full and final account of what man has been and what he has done. Carried to its last precision, it still leaves abundant scope for other methods which do not profess to be scientific, but which by their very spontaneity have a value of their own. The very weakness of the individualistic methods may throw light on portions of a subject, the full significance of which escapes the impersonal observer. A writer of strong idiosyncrasy sees certain aspects of things with an intensity which may weaken his general force, and betray him into disproportionate emphasis, but which at the same time may suggest points of view that the most severely scientific of observers cannot afford to neglect. In short, to a full induction from the recorded experience of man there must go the collective observation of every type of mind and character. In the totality of individual impressions alone is to be found the definite imprint of persons and events, and any approximation to that imprint can be attained only by the multiplied images conceived by diverse minds and drawn by diverse hands.

These considerations on the different methods of treating history seem to have a special bearing on the present occasion. For one on whom it devolves to inaugurate a new subject in a great university it must be difficult to decide whether his advantages or responsibilities are the greater. If he is unencumbered by precedent, he is on the other hand expected to establish a tradition that may not be unworthy of his subject. In the case of a subject like national history, moreover, he

comes under an obligation not only to his university but to the whole body of his countrymen. In founding a Chair of Scottish History Sir William Fraser undoubtedly intended that it should help to promote the systematic and scientific study of national origins—a study, it may be said, which is not only a national duty, but a duty to the world. The grand aim of universal history being nothing else than to reproduce the unbroken chain of man's consciousness from the beginning, the nation that fails to contribute to this result imperfectly discharges its obligation to advancing humanity.

It cannot be said for such studies, indeed, that they directly tend to the purely material interests of mankind. In this respect they belong to a different sphere from the physical sciences, the object of which is to conquer the forces of nature, and to bend them to human purposes. But universities, from the time that they have had a being, have discharged a double function to the communities in which they originated. On the one hand, they have provided the necessary disciplines for the practical activities of life, and on the other, they have conserved and fostered those ideal elements on which human society ultimately rests. If the successive teachers in the Chair of Ancient History and Palæography should contribute in some measure to the second of these ends, the generous founder will not be said to have missed his aim.

THE MOULDING OF THE SCOTTISH NATION

AT the death of Alexander III. in 1286 Scotland made territorially one country; the first of Scottish kings, Alexander ruled in fact, as well as in name, from the Pentland Firth to the Solway. His own special achievement had been, not only to rule the mainland with a firm hand, but to add the Hebrides and even the Isle of Man to the territory he had inherited. It had taken well-nigh eight centuries to complete the work of consolidation to which Alexander put the finishing touch—a work that had its origin about the beginning of the sixth century, when in the modern Argyleshire a band of Celts from Ireland founded the Dalriadic Kingdom. Some two centuries and a half elapse, and one kingdom is formed to the north of the Forth by the union of the Picts and Scots under Kenneth Macalpine; and within two centuries more one king nominally ruled over the whole mainland of Scotland. It was in 1018 that this end was achieved; and the whole intervening period between that date and the accession of Alexander III. had been needed to make Scotland a territorial unit. It was a great work that had been accomplished, and, with the exception of England, no other country in Europe had attained a similar degree of territorial cohesion.

But though Scotland was territorially one, it would be an abuse of words to speak of it as a nation. The bond of common memories, common hopes and aspirations, which is requisite to the evolution of a national consciousness, did not and could not yet exist. The heterogeneous elements that composed its population had only the tradition of mutual estrangement or hereditary hostility. Located in different regions and

speaking different tongues, what common interests could exist between the Briton of Strathclyde, the Gael of the Highlands, and the Saxon of Lothian? Of all the countries in Western Europe, indeed, there was none where greater obstacles existed to prevent the formation of a united people than in Scotland. Diverse races, diverse tongues, a land by its distribution of mountain, river and sea almost destined by nature to permanent regional division—such were some of the impediments to be overcome before a nation in any real sense of the term could take shape and consistency within its boundaries. The process, it is evident, must needs be a protracted one, and, as in all human evolution, what we call accident must play a large part in it. However inherent and powerful the tendency towards unity, events over which the incipient nation had no control might intervene and dash the fair prospect of national growth. The object of the present lecture is to trace the growth of a national consciousness in the Scottish people, and to note the main causes that forwarded or impeded it.

In the development of nations there is of necessity much that is common to all of them. The same common instincts of human nature must everywhere be at work, and in the case of a society like that of Western Christendom similar agencies must have gone to the common result. Under the régime of feudalism and the medieval church, the different countries possessed common institutions, were informed by common ideals, and by community of interests were borne unconsciously onward to the same goal. Though in the evolution of national consciousness, however, there was thus a general uniformity, there were peculiarities in the process which constitute the essential difference between the national history of one country and another, and like other countries Scotland had a development specifically its own. It must be our object in the present discussion, therefore, to note at once what was common to Scotland with other countries in

their respective national developments, and what was peculiar to herself in her national growth.

Amid the disasters that fell so thick on Scotland after the death of Alexander III., the most far-sighted contemporary could only have predicted the undoing of the work that had been accomplished by that king and the long line of his predecessors. As the history of the previous century had shown, it was only under such strong and sagacious rulers as David I. and the last two Alexanders that the heterogeneous elements of the kingdom could be held together. On the death of Alexander III. there followed the extinction of a dynasty, a disputed succession in the most aggravated form, and a war for bare existence against a foreign invader. In all human probability the result must be either the absorption of the kingdom by its hereditary enemy and rival, or its relapse into the original elements that composed it. From both of these dangers it had in reality the narrowest escape. Alexander had hardly been dead before civil war broke out. Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, who claimed the Crown on the ground of nomination and descent, sought to make good his claim by the sword, but it is impossible to imagine that in the existing circumstances he could ever have established himself as the acknowledged King of Scots. The intervention of Edward I. had at least this immediate result—it arrested civil war and for the time prevented national disintegration. The grandson of the Lord of Annandale, the hero-king Robert I., succeeded in making himself sole ruler of the kingdom, but it was only his own remarkable career and the new experience the country had undergone that made such a consummation possible. In the war of deliverance which he carried to so glorious a conclusion, the various sections of the Scottish people were drawn together by common interests, which in large degree modified hereditary antagonisms, and disposed them to find a common head. The greatness of Bruce's achievement placed him in a position

which left no opening for a successful rival, and through constraint or self-interest or affection the majority of the people recognised in him the only safeguard against internecine war and a foreign enemy.

But, if there had been the narrowest risk of dismemberment, there had been an equally narrow risk of absorption by England. Had Edward II. been cast in the mould of his father, or had Edward III. not been diverted by other schemes of conquest, Scotland must either have bled to death or reluctantly surrendered her independence.

As it was, she emerged from the long struggle an independent and a united kingdom. Her material loss had been great. For a full century and a half after the War of Independence the Scottish people cast regretful eyes backward to the golden age of Alexander III. But, if the material sacrifice had been disastrous, the spiritual gain was an adequate compensation. 'A people without an epopee,' says Goethe, 'can never become much worth,' and Scotland had now secured the materials of an epopee which in due time was to become a national possession. First the deeds of Bruce were commemorated in the soberly imaginative poem of Barbour, and at a later date Wallace was transfigured by Blind Harry with the lineaments and proportions requisite to make a historic personage pass into the popular imagination. Wallace, says Wordsworth, left his name

' Like a wild flower

All over his dear country,'

and his deeds, he goes on to say, created

' A local soul

Of independence and stern liberty.'

Such was the impression Wordsworth obtained from his tour in Scotland in 1814, and his words fitly describe the moral and spiritual gain of the War of Independence. In a degree far beyond what she had been in the prosperous days of Alexander III., Scotland had now become a united people, with

the common traditions and aspirations which go to form a national consciousness.

Even yet, however, Scotland could hardly be described as a nation in the sense in which we now understand the term. In the conditions of society, as they then existed in every country of Christendom, there were inherent forces at work which inevitably tended to hold apart the constituent elements of any people and to prevent their fusion into a uniform whole. Of these separate forces the chief were the conditions imposed by the feudal system and by the economic conditions of trade and commerce. Within his own domain each feudal lord was a petty king, who for the most part regarded his neighbours as his natural rivals or enemies. As were his own feelings, so were those of all dependent on him. They virtually composed a self-subsistent society with little concern in the greater world around them. Such law and justice as were to be had were mainly administered by their feudal superior ; and the necessities of life were found in the cultivation of his domains. So long, therefore, as a country was subdivided among such isolated societies, the close national union that can only come of interdependence was practically unattainable.

If the dwellers in the country districts were thus held apart by the conditions of feudal tenure, the towns were equally isolated by the conditions of trade and commerce. A conclusive proof of this fact is that every town of any consequence was surrounded by a line of defence, which it was one of the chief duties of the citizens to maintain in an effective state of repair. These lines of defence, it is to be noted, served a double purpose. They provided security against actual violence—violence from rival towns, from neighbouring feudal potentates, from foreign invaders. In the present connection, however, it is more important to note the second object which they served. By the conditions under which the medieval towns had grown up, each was to a large degree an

independent centre, living its own life, and disposed to regard every similar community as a rival or rather as an enemy. The reason for this attitude is simple. At one time or other the town had received certain trading privileges from its superior—king, ecclesiastic, or feudal lord—and on the conservation of these privileges its existence and prosperity depended. It would be irrelevant to discuss the nature and origin of these privileges, and it is sufficient to note for our present purpose that the lines of defence that surrounded the towns were indispensable for their preservation. At the different gates in the wall or dyke every stranger could be questioned as to the motives that brought him there. If he was suspected of any intention of infringing the town privileges, he was either refused admittance or placed under proper surveillance. Only on one occasion did the townsmen freely open their arms to all and sundry. At the annual fair all barriers were thrown down, and, so long as it lasted, absolute freedom of trade prevailed. Among the forces that made for national as opposed to municipal ends, therefore, these fairs must be assigned their due place. In Scotland, as in other countries, every town of any consequence had either by royal grant or by immemorial prescription the right of holding its fair. As on the occasion of its celebration merchants and traders flocked to the town from every part of the kingdom, it was then borne in upon its citizens that they formed part of a larger whole in which all had a common interest. Still, the normal attitude of every citizen was that his own community was an isolated society surrounded by dangerous rivals against whose encroachments he must ever be on his guard. Such being the relations of every town in the kingdom to every other, it is evident that the growth of a national consciousness in the most enterprising portion of the inhabitants of every country must of necessity be a slow and gradual process. Till new economic conditions arose, in fact, collective endeavour was impossible, and a fully-developed nation could

not in the nature of things be formed. In due time, as we shall see, such new conditions did arise, and Scotland, like its neighbours, did not fail to profit by them.

These obstacles to the growth of national feeling—the isolating tendencies of feudalism and of trade—were common to Scotland and all other countries. But there were other impeding forces which in her case were of special significance. From the nature of her climate and surface, intercommunication was attended with peculiar difficulties. The construction and maintenance of roads implied an amount of labour and expense far beyond what was necessary in such countries as England and France. In no country in the Middle Ages were the roads such as to render communication an easy matter, but in Scotland, with its obstructing mountains, rivers, and bogs, they were practically impassable during a great portion of the year. But without rapid and frequent intercommunication the intercourse necessary to weld a people into a united whole was impossible, and not till past the middle of the eighteenth century can this obstacle be said to have been tolerably overcome.

But besides these physical impediments there were other hindrances to national fusion which formed a special difficulty in the case of Scotland. Though acknowledging a common head, the various portions of which the kingdom was composed continued to be inhabited by distinct peoples speaking different tongues.

Between the native of the wild district of Galloway, the Gael of the Highlands, and the Teuton of Lothian and the Eastern coast, there could be little community of feeling, few palpable common interests and, except on rare occasions of general peril, but little united action towards a common end. In the case of Galloway, the wild nature of the country and the fighting instincts of its people, perpetuated by the rivalries of the clans who divided its territory among them, long availed to hold it apart from the main stream of national

development. Even into the fifteenth century Galloway was governed by laws of its own, and till the beginning of the eighteenth it clung to the Celtic language, which it had inherited from before the days of St. Columba. Still more estranging were the conditions of the Highland section of the kingdom. Of wider extent and even more inaccessible from its natural features, the region of the Highlands seemed destined by nature to independence. In greater degree than Galloway, its inhabitants had a tradition of hostility toward the Lowlands, which only the slow growth of time and the persuasive influences of modern civilisation have been able to overcome. Till the opening of the fifteenth century the Lords of the Isles regarded themselves as independent sovereigns, and made common cause with England against their nominal head the King of Scots.

Such were some of the forces that made against the development of a united Scottish people. Yet, as the issue was to prove, the centripetal tendencies must have been more powerful than those that made for decentralisation. First we have to note that in all the countries that made up Christendom there had from the beginning been a tendency towards the formation of distinct kingdoms, ruled by one head, and inhabited by peoples bound by ever-strengthening ties of common interest. For special reasons, which need not now be considered, Italy and Germany were exceptions to the general rule; but by the close of the fifteenth century three great kingdoms, France, Spain, and England, had been formed on the same general lines of development. As an integral part of Christendom, Scotland had been subjected to the same influences as these other countries. Consciously or unconsciously, therefore, she was pushing for the same goal. From the War of Independence onwards she had been more or less in the current of European politics, and this was in itself a powerful stimulus towards that national unity which alone could give her a voice in the general affairs of Europe.

Among the unifying influences that went to create distinct nations, that exercised by the Church can hardly be exaggerated. In the case of Scotland the teaching of the Church was almost the sole common influence to which its people were subjected. Trade and commerce, in the Middle Ages, as we have seen, were separative as well as unifying agencies ; but such powers as the Church exerted were wholly in the direction of cohesion. From the teaching of its religion, by the ministry of its officials, the Gael learned that he was of the same flesh as the Saxon, that he was placed in the world for the same purpose, and that the same final destiny was the lot of both. By the organisation of the Church, which bound in a common whole the length and breadth of the kingdom, the idea of unity was brought home to every subject with a force and persuasiveness which no other agency could exert to the same degree. The parish church, with its ministrants, was at once the symbol of unity and the most effective factor in enforcing it.

In England national unity had been greatly furthered by the development of its representative assembly ; to the Parliament of Scotland, on the other hand, a similar degree of influence cannot be attributed. At no time were the Scottish people greatly exercised regarding the privileges of their representative assembly ; and it was only on occasions when their own interests were specially involved that the sovereign and nobles manifested any lively desire to improve its constitution. During the fifteenth century, when its constituent parts were fully developed, the Scottish Parliament had but little prestige and little real importance ; and for two excellent reasons. Through the weakness of the Crown it became the mere tool of successive factions ; and through the weakness of the executive its laws were made only to be set at nought. To the Scottish Parliament, therefore, we can assign but a subsidiary part in the moulding of the Scottish nation.

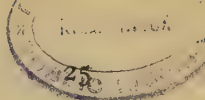
After the Church, as a power tending to unity, is probably to be reckoned the administration of law and justice. When it was brought home to the Highlander that he must seek justice from the Sheriffs' Courts at Dingwall and Tarbert, and to the Lowlander that he must seek it in Edinburgh, Perth, and Aberdeen, he realised that he was part of a great mechanism, with the working of which he must find himself in harmony. It was the misfortune of Scotland, however, that the royal judicatories were permanently enfeebled by a weak executive ; and thus was lost that confidence in a central source of justice which makes so large an element in what we call a national consciousness.

Great public events, involving the welfare of a whole people, must also play a chief part in national development. For a century and a half after the War of Independence, however, there was hardly an outstanding event that exercised a powerful influence in invigorating national sentiment. No great movement absorbed the mind of the people ; and no public calamity or triumph set their hearts beating in unison with common fear or exultation. In the protracted struggle between the Crown and the nobility, which was the dominant characteristic of the period, there was little to stimulate patriotism or to bind in closer union the different sections of the kingdom. To the people in general it was indifferent which faction gained a temporary ascendancy, though the debasement of the coinage by James III. appears to have evoked a popular feeling which strengthened the successive rebellions against his authority. There was, indeed, one permanent feeling in the breasts of the Scottish people which must be reckoned among the most effectual influences in fusing them into a nation. Since the War of Independence England had never lost sight of its aim of re-attaching the country which had once been in its grasp. Its own troubles had prevented the repetition of the concentrated attempts of Edward I.; but persistently, though intermittently, almost every English

king had shown that he only wanted the opportunity to repeat Edward's work. Hatred and fear of an inveterate and formidable enemy, therefore, were feelings shared by the great mass of the Scottish people, and which were bound to strengthen the sentiment of a common nationality. The animating motive of Blind Harry's poem, produced at the close of the fifteenth century, is sheer detestation of England—a motive which finds expression even in Acts of Parliament and other documents of the period.

With the opening of the sixteenth century begins a new phase in the development of the European countries. The new departure was due to the widened scope of thought and action in almost every sphere of human experience. In speculation the scholastic philosophy ceased to be a living interest for the most active minds; before the century was long begun Luther shook Christendom to its foundations; trade and commerce passed under new laws and regulations, becoming national instead of merely municipal concerns; and the very limits of the earth were extended by the discovery of another hemisphere. Under the influence of such facts and ideas individuals and peoples were quickened to a degree of self-consciousness which had been impossible under the comparative routine of the Middle Age. In different measures and by different manifestations we see the vivifying forces at work in England, Spain, and France—now consolidated kingdoms under the direction of virtually absolute rulers. Isolated as she was by nature and circumstances, Scotland could not share to the same extent as these countries in the general movement that was ushering in the new time. Later in the century, indeed, she had to pass through an experience of her own which supplied the spiritual momentum requisite to reveal a people to itself and give a direction to its destinies. Yet under James IV., at the opening of the century, Scotland made a notable stride forward in national development.

It was a fortunate dispensation that gave her a king like



James at this special period. Though somewhat lacking in the sense of royal responsibility, he possessed many qualities that fitted him to govern a people when novelties were in the air. Intelligent, curious, and enterprising, he was peculiarly open to new ideas, and even unduly eager to see them put in practice. The work he accomplished in consolidating his kingdom gives him a notable place among our princes. Beyond any of his predecessors, James succeeded in making the Highlands and Islands an integral part of his dominion. He definitely broke the power of the Lords of the Isles, thus ridding the Crown of a power that had been virtually a formidable rival, and he reduced the Highlands generally to a state of peace and order which they had never previously known. It has just been said that one of the chief forces that tend to create a nation is the sense of a supreme fountain of justice over which the prince is the presiding divinity, and among our kings few did more to deepen this sense throughout every class of his subjects. He was indefatigable in his attendance on the justice-eyres, by which justice was administered at regular intervals throughout every quarter of the kingdom. Above all he gave a local place and habitation to the Supreme Court of Justice—known as the ‘Daily Council’—by virtually making Edinburgh its permanent abode. And, in passing, the significance of this step deserves to be specially noted. Till the close of the fifteenth century Scotland could hardly be said to have possessed a capital. Before that period parliaments and conventions had met indifferently in the chief towns of the kingdom as the exigencies of the moment had dictated. The kings, also, had no fixed place of abode, and took up their residence wherever state business or their own pleasure called them. Henceforward, however, Edinburgh became the settled home of the sovereign; except on rare occasions Parliament now met there; and there, as we have seen, James fixed the headquarters of law. The significance of this concentration was that Scotland now possessed an

acknowledged centre from which could radiate all the inappreciable influences that bind a people to a common goal and destiny. What the possession of an undisputed capital implied for the growth of national feeling, is abundantly proved in the history of every country. We are now carefully warned against the use of physical illustrations in reference to history, but it seems an innocent analogy to compare the function of the capital in the body politic to the function of the heart in the animal body.

In still another sphere of his activity James did an important work in consolidating his kingdom, though, as the future was to show, it was a work attended by unhappy as well as benign results. In the three contemporary kingdoms—England, France, and Spain—there was an equally marked endeavour on the part of their rulers to make themselves absolute princes. Henry VIII., Francis I., and Charles V., all in greater or less degree succeeded in achieving this object. The policy of James IV. shows that he consciously aimed at the same result, and the history of his reign proves that he in a great degree attained it. From the time that he reached his majority he appears to have set himself to dispense with Parliaments, and to govern through the Privy Council, which, though it dates from David II., first took definite shape in James's own reign. But, as the members of this Council were his own nominees, he thus made himself virtually the uncontrolled master of his kingdom. The immediate outcome of this policy was in the true interests of the country. The great national evil of the preceding century had been the overriding of the Crown by the nobles, with the result that effective administration and a consecutive public policy had equally been rendered impossible. In these conditions the tendency towards national unity had been inevitably checked and retarded. When James found himself in a position to govern through a docile Privy Council, this evil came to a temporary end. From the time that he reached manhood, the nobles

ceased to play a leading part in the affairs of the kingdom ; and he is himself the one dominating figure to his reign's disastrous close. But, though the immediate consequences of his policy were beneficent, it was fraught with sinister results for the future. It was the example of James IV. that inspired James VI. and Charles I. in imposing their will on their subjects through a Council which simply existed to register their behests.

Such were the important results of James's rule in knitting his kingdom to a closer unity. Yet of all the actions and events of his reign, it was perhaps its closing disaster that most effectually served the happy end. Such a calamity as that of Flodden has a power to evoke a consentaneous national feeling which no other experience can produce. It is the misfortunes of the household that bind its members in the closest bonds of interest and affection, and, as all history shows, it is the sense of common calamity that gives to a nation one heart and soul and mind. On the field of Flodden, as we have been so often told, there was hardly a family of name that did not lose father, brother, or son. From the remotest Hebrides, from Highlands and Lowlands, the ill-starred host had come, on an errand from which human foresight and ' metaphysical aid ' seemed alike to dissuade the infatuated king, yet was it precisely this sense of inevitable doom, combined with overwhelming disaster, that gave the memory of Flodden an undying place in the heart and imagination of the Scottish people.

The sobriquets by which James V. was known among his subjects—' The Gaberlunzie King,' the ' Red Tod,' the ' King of the Commons '—show that he held a permanent place in their affections, but his public policy cannot be said to have forwarded the work of consolidating the nation. His reign saw the beginnings of a new chapter in the national history. A fateful question was now presented to the country, the decision of which must determine the direction of its future

development. The question was—what were to be its future relations to England and France respectively? For more than two centuries England had been regarded as a natural enemy, against whose insatiable cupidity Scotland must ever be on its guard. As an ally against their common enemy she had cultivated France, and the last fruit of the alliance had been the disaster of Flodden. In the people at large that disaster had only intensified the hereditary hatred of its instrument, but thinking men had already begun to be of opinion that the time had come when a new policy would be in the best interests of the country. John Major, the historian, and later Sir David Lyndsay, the poet, both ‘kindly Scots,’ if ever there were such, publicly argued that England and not France was Scotland’s natural ally. Henry VIII.’s breach with Rome, however, at first seemed to put reconciliation further off than ever, though, in the gyration of events, it was to be the main cause of drawing the two countries together. James V. had never any hesitation as to which of the two paths he should follow. His first marriage with Magdalen of France and his second with Mary of Lorraine committed not only himself but his successor Mary to the hereditary policy of antagonism to England and alliance with France. In this policy James had the sympathies of his people behind him, and the character and conduct of Henry VIII. deepened the estrangement between the two peoples. What we have to note in connection with our present purpose, however, is that James had not inherited his father’s gifts of conciliating or repressing a turbulent nobility. The disgraceful affair of Solway Moss is the final commentary on his conduct of affairs both at home and abroad. At the call of James IV. noble and commoner had followed their King across the English border; despite entreaties and threats, his son could not collect a force to attend him on a similar adventure. In the opposition of the nobles, there were doubtless very mixed motives, but the motive which they themselves put forward

had its ground in fact and reason ; in his eagerness to carry fire and sword into England James V. was serving France better than his own kingdom.

At the death of James V. it might seem that Scotland was less a united nation than it had been at the death of his father. In point of fact she had but entered on one of those momentous crises in which a nation comes to a full consciousness of itself, and with fully opened eyes chooses a path which its instincts impel it to follow. The reign of Mary had not well begun when her people had to face another dilemma besides that of the French or English alliance. The choice between two policies was complicated by the choice between two religions. With the details of the revolution in policy and religion we are not here concerned. The question before us is, in what manner and degree the double revolution influenced the development of the people that carried it through.

The one governing fact is that for the first time in their history the Scottish people had to determine a question which demanded the forth-putting of their whole heart and mind. But here it is well to remember that when we speak of a nation we do not mean the number of heads that make up the population. The nation of any country is that section of the population which, by its capacity of thought and feeling, by the strength of its convictions and the strenuousness of its action, determines the main current of the general life and presents the characteristics which specifically distinguish one nation from another. Understood in this sense, the Scottish nation during the reign of Mary consisted of a few thousands, mainly to be found in the chief towns of the kingdom. On this elect few it devolved to choose the course which the whole people were to follow and to develop those national traits by which the Scottish character is known to the world. But of this chosen number it was not to be expected that all would see eye to eye on the momentous questions that were submitted

to them. Some by natural instinct favoured the old order, and wished to abide in the ways of their fathers. To such it seemed the wisest and safest policy to hold by the ancient religion and the traditional alliance, and not to venture on courses which might lead no man knew whither. Wherever the new faith had appeared, these persons argued,—in France, in Germany, in England—civil discord and revolution had been the invariable result. On the other hand, the greater number of the select body of the people came to be of a different mind. To them the teaching of the new religion appeared to be a revelation from Heaven which no individual or nation could reject without forfeiture both in this world and in the next. But if the new faith were to be adopted, it was with Protestant England and not with Catholic France that the destinies of Scotland must be linked. It was in the collision of thought and feeling between these two classes of persons that a Scottish nation in the strict sense of the term became a real entity, conscious of itself and with a destiny to fulfil. In the imbroglio of the Reformation struggle we are apt to lose sight of this fact. In the maze of statecraft and diplomacy we see only the failure and success of one and another stroke of policy, and we are bewildered into imagining that these were the determining factors in the final issue. In point of fact, statesmen and diplomatists were but the conscious or unconscious instruments of the new forces that were working in society, and which were impelling the various peoples along the paths which long-inherited instincts marked out for them. The French people, says Michelet, would not have the Reformation; Scotland, on the other hand, wished to have it; and the different choice of the two peoples is only to be explained by their respective idiosyncrasies which had been evolved in the long process of time.

The essential significance of the Scottish Reformation, therefore, is that for the first time in our history we find a great question submitted to a public opinion sufficiently developed

to understand and realise its importance. The result, as has been said, was a collision of thought and feeling which evoked into clear day the latent instincts and propensions which had been evolved in the past history of the people. Character in the individual is formed in the conflict of warring impulses, and so it is with nations. Whenever a nation attains to self-consciousness the same phenomena invariably appear. If the nation is truly alive, there will be division on fundamental questions; when such division ceases, it implies that the nation has ceased to exist, either through its own paralysis or through the tyranny of external circumstance.

The course of Scottish history subsequent to the Reformation is the sufficient illustration of the foregoing remarks. During the century and a half which elapsed from the Reformation to the Revolution, Scotland was engaged in seeking a political equilibrium which had been disturbed by the overthrow of the ancient religion. The successive sovereigns of Scotland and the most strenuous section of their subjects held incompatible views regarding the relations of Church and State; and, as each of the parties believed their opinions to be the absolute will of God, compromise was impossible so long as this state of things endured. But the very existence of such a permanent crisis is the proof that in Scotland there now existed a nation in the strictest sense of the term. In the period prior to the Reformation we have no parallel to the situation that had been created by that event. Down to the middle of the sixteenth century we find occasional popular discontent and chronic disputes between the Crown and the feudal lords, but we find no great national question evoking a public opinion divided alike by reason and passion; in other words, previous to the change of religion, Scotland cannot be regarded as a nation in the true sense of the term. If we fix our eyes on the most remarkable event in Scottish history during the seventeenth century, we realise what in

its fullest sense is implied in the distinction. In the portentous uprising which produced the National Covenant we find all the manifestations which characterise a national act—unity of action determined by reason and passion towards a fully apprehended goal.

THE SCOTTISH NOBILITY AND THEIR PART IN THE NATIONAL HISTORY

THE Scottish nobles undoubtedly bear a bad name in our national history. The general opinion of them, indeed, might be summed up in a single sentence: they bullied weak kings and abetted bad ones, and in each case it was their own selfish interests that inspired them. In passing such a judgment, however, it is well to remember the saying of Burke. It is futile to indict a nation, Burke said, for in so doing we are, in fact, indicting human nature. Though the saying of Burke does not apply with the same force to a class as to a nation, yet if we find a numerous body of men, conditioned by common interests, playing the same part throughout successive centuries, the inference must surely be that they were but following the natural instincts implanted in universal man. Put the worst construction we choose on our historic nobility, our judgment of them must be mitigated by the consideration that had we been in their place we should have been influenced by the same motives, and done our best or worst for the class to which we belonged.

But do the facts of our national history justify such a sweeping condemnation of the general conduct of the Scottish nobility? Was their action so maleficent that it was productive of no single benefit to the country to which they owed their birth and their privileges? In the lives of nations, as of individuals, there are few, if any, unmixed evils, and the presumption is that even taking the Scottish nobles at the worst, they did some good to their nation, even though we may deny them the credit of doing it from a disinterested

motives. So far as the scope of a single paper will permit, let us follow the action of the Scottish nobles throughout the period when it most directly influenced the national development—not holding a brief for them, but simply trying to see the scope of their action in the light of the general movements of the time. In making such a survey, it is necessary that we should go beyond the limits of Scotland, since in every period of her history Scotland was directly or indirectly influenced by what took place in other countries of Christendom. At one time or other every class in the Scottish nation was affected by the examples of the corresponding classes among other peoples; our kings learned lessons from the kings of France and England, our nobles from their own class in the same countries, and our burghs from similar corporations in England or on the Continent.

It is from the reign of David II. that the action of the Scottish nobles begins consistently to affect the course of the national development. They had been sufficiently in evidence both during the War of Independence and before it, but it was in the reign of David II. that they first began as a class to realise their relation to the Crown on the one hand, and the Church and the burghs on the other. From the necessities of their position their relation to all three was equally that of antagonism. They dreaded encroachments on their privileges by the Crown; they regarded the higher clergy as their formidable rivals in wealth and popular influence; and with a sure instinct they saw in the developing commerce of the burghs the growth of a power that would undermine the very foundations on which their order was based. From the reign of David to the Reformation we can trace in the persistent policy of the nobles the prompting of all these antagonisms, though it is their opposition to the Crown that is written largest in history. At the Reformation the nobility, like every other class in the nation, came under influences which profoundly affected their position, their aims, and

methods of action. Still, as an order they continued to maintain the traditions of their origin, and at every crisis we find them animated by the same motives which had actuated them in the period prior to the Reformation. Let us then look at the part which they played during these two periods respectively—that preceding the Reformation, and the century and a half that followed it.

On the death of Bruce in 1329 the Scottish nobles were in a position which for good and ill was fraught with momentous issues for the future of the kingdom. From a policy as necessary as it was prudent at the time, Bruce had made lavish grants of lands to such as had stood by him in his great work of freeing the country from the English domination. In the case of such families as that of the Douglasses, the grants had been on a scale which made their feudal heads all but the co-equals of the sovereign himself. In every part of the kingdom such feudatories were to be found, and if they had not been divided by rival interests among themselves, it would have been an easy task for them to wipe out the monarchy and set up as petty kings on their own account. Powerful in their own resources, the condition of the kingdom rendered them still more formidable. In the first place, the Crown was lacking in the main elements that gave stability and force to a feudal monarchy. It had been the greatness of Bruce's achievement, and not the family claims that he could advance to the throne, that had made him the honoured sovereign of his people. His son David came to the throne with all the prestige of his father's name, but his own character and conduct were such as to make his subjects forget the father's glory in the irresponsibility of the son. On his death came the dynasty of the Stewarts, which for essential and accidental reasons was unhappy in all the circumstances that were requisite to establish it in the affection and respect of the country. Through the accident of his father's marriage with Marjory Bruce, Robert II.,

the first of the Stewart line, inherited the throne, and, though his right may have been indefeasible, it was not forgotten by the proud barons that he had been but one of themselves, and neither the most distinguished nor of the most ancient descent. As it happened, also, the first kings of the House of Stewart possessed none of the qualities that might have compensated for the suddenness of their elevation. Robert II. and Robert III. were both such feeble personages that they remained in tutelage throughout the whole of their reigns. While families like the Douglasses were performing brilliant feats of valour in defence of their country, the Kings of Scots, its natural champions, were spending their lives in amiable indolence in such courts as they possessed. From the death of Robert III., moreover, a singular fatality attended the House of Stewart—a fatality which deeply affected the entire development of the country. From the accession of James I. to the accession of Charles I.—a period of two hundred and nineteen years—there was a minority, longer or shorter, in every reign. The effect of minorities in weakening the Crown and strengthening the barons is illustrated not only in the history of Scotland but in that of every feudal country. A French noble at the close of the sixteenth century pithily summed up the traditions of his order with reference to royal minorities. ‘If the King is a minor,’ he said, ‘we will be majors.’ Through this combination of circumstances it was that the Scottish baronage were placed in a position that enabled them to make so light of the authority of successive kings. In other countries, as in France during the Hundred Years’ War, the nobles occasionally found themselves in the same relations to their kings, but nowhere did so many circumstances for so prolonged a period make it possible for them to maintain their advantage.

In their relations to the Crown, the nobles of Scotland met with no such serious counter-checks as their class found in England or in France. In these two countries during the

period of which we are speaking, the kings found strong support both from the clergy and the commons. In Scotland the clergy and the commons were generally on the side of the Crown, but neither the one nor the other was sufficiently powerful to sway the balance steadily in its favour. The time had passed when spiritual terrors daunted kings and nobles alike, and it was only when upheld by temporal authority that the Church could make its influence felt on any class in the country. But, as the kings did not possess this authority, the clergy were unequal to maintaining the balance between the rival powers in the State. And the communities in the towns were equally powerless to turn the scale in the direction they would have wished. It was to the kings that the royal burghs, the most important of the towns, looked for their privileges and the encouragement of their enterprise, but the towns themselves had conflicting interests, and they were incapable of the steady collective action which might have made them an effectual force in the country.

From this survey of the position of the Scottish nobility in the two centuries preceding the Reformation, it will be seen that they had ample opportunity of displaying all the instincts of their class, and it is precisely the manner in which they did display them that has given them their bad name. The iniquities laid to their charge may be ranged under three heads—their addiction to private feuds, their lack of patriotism, and their contempt of the royal authority.

In connection with all three counts, there is a well-known saying which should not be forgotten: 'One century may judge another century, but only his own century may judge the individual,' and the saying holds equally true in our judgment of a class. In applying this maxim, be it noted, we are not inventing excuses; we are merely seeking an explanation. That private feuds abounded in Scotland at the period under notice, that they were the perennial cause of bloodshed and anarchy, are facts of which there can be

no question. But, as the feudal society was constituted, this state of things was in truth as natural as is trade competition at the present day. The innumerable bonds of manrent, by which one group of feudatories entered into a paction against their common enemies, are the eloquent commentary on this fact. The root of all the mischief was that each feudal lord was responsible for the life and goods of every dweller on his domain. An unavenged injury to any person or thing, however indirectly connected with him, was at once a personal insult and a derogation from his authority. If he could not defend those who looked to him for protection, the very reason for his existence was at an end. Placed in this position, he was like a spider at the centre of its web, every vibration of which touched the nerve of its occupant. A neighbouring town, a refractory vassal, the lord of a contiguous domain, would injure or insult one of his dependants, and there was a quarrel ready-made which he was bound to see through with all the resources at his command. And it is to be remembered that the feudal baron claimed as his prescriptive right the privilege of making war on his neighbours when all other means of obtaining redress had failed. The kings had, indeed, in large degree succeeded in depriving them of this privilege, but the barons never admitted that it was not their inalienable right.

When such were the responsibilities and such the powers of the Scottish baron of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it can hardly excite our wonder that he was naturally a hot-blooded and turbulent person, ready at any moment to make good his case at the sword's point. As was said, the turbulence of the Scots nobility cannot be gainsaid, but what of the members of their class in other countries? If we take our specimens from Germany, we know that the exploits of a Wolf of Badenoch were of every-day occurrence in that country. The famous Goetz von Berlichingen, of whom Goethe made a hero, was not the greatest sinner of his kind, but the record

of his deeds leaves far behind that of any Douglas of them all. In Germany the central authority was even weaker than it was in Scotland; but what was the character of the feudal noble in France, which in the arts of life was in advance of most other countries? Here is a passage from a living French historian, in which he describes the French noble of the period of the Hundred Years' War.

'The commanders of the royal armies, those who ought to have been honoured as the defenders of their country, were not less merciless to the common people than the English or the brigands. They violated every law prescribed by the code of chivalry. Charles of Blois, whom the inhabitants of Brittany honoured as a saint, did not even keep his word to towns which had capitulated. Princes of the blood royal committed the most shameful crimes; the Duc de Berri poignarded the Count of Flanders; John the Fearless had his cousin, the Duke of Orleans, assassinated, and he was himself done to death by his kinsman, the Dauphin of France. One of the Dukes of Brittany had his own brother murdered; a certain Count de Foix allowed his son to die of hunger in a dungeon. A certain Sieur de Giac did away with his wife; a certain Sieur de Retz kidnapped little children, and made experiments in sorcery by subjecting them to a slow death.' Such was the French baron of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Paint his Scottish brother as black as we may, it would certainly appear that neither Scottish King nor Scottish people would have made a good bargain by exchanging him.

A second charge against the Scottish feudal nobility is that they were lacking in patriotism. The facts of their history do not justify such a sweeping statement, but it is true that certain of the most eminent of them did not scruple to fight under the English banner against their own countrymen. In the reign of Robert III. the great Earl of March became a renegade because Robert's heir, the Duke of Rothesay, threw over March's daughter, to whom he had been betrothed,

and took a wife from the House of Douglas. In the reign of James II., the Earl of Douglas rebelled against his rightful prince, and when beaten, did not hesitate to offer his services to England against his native country. Their action, we say, was detestable, but we have to recall the fact that the relations of the Scottish nobles to their kings had been dubious from the beginning. As many of them owned domains in both countries, their allegiance was a variable disposition, largely determined by the circumstances of the moment. Moreover, the successive hazards of the Scottish succession had unsettled public opinion with regard to dynastic claims. Robert Bruce had made good his claim by his pre-eminence as a soldier and a statesman; but the fact could not be ignored that John Balliol had as good a right to the throne as he, and, on the accession of David Bruce, the son of John Balliol was preferred by many to the son of the hero-King. And the House of Stewart, we have seen, alike from its origin and from the character of its first representatives, did not command such respect and devotion from the Scottish people as to surround it in special degree with the sacrosanct halo of sovereignty.

But the truth is, that in accusing the Scottish nobles of lack of patriotism we are testing them by a standard which we cannot in historic justice apply to them. It may be broadly said that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the idea of patriotism, as we understand it, was hardly realised by any class in any country of Christendom. If any national experience was fitted to awake patriotic sentiment, it was the experience of France during the Hundred Years' War, yet here is how the French historian already quoted describes the conduct of the French nobility during that disastrous period: 'During the so-called English wars,' he says, 'it was Frenchmen themselves who did most mischief to their country. It was Robert of Artois and Geoffrey of Harcourt who incited the first debarcation of Edward III. on the shores

of France ; it was with an army partly composed of Gascons that the Black Prince gained the battle of Poitiers ; it was a French prince, Charles the Bad, who ravaged the Île de France ; it was the Duke of Burgundy who opened the gates of Paris to the English ; it was a Norman bishop and Norman judges who burned Joan of Arc.' In England patriotic sentiment was more developed than in France, but in the conduct of the English nobles as a class during the Wars of the Roses there is little appearance of a disinterested attachment to their country.

But if we wish a striking illustration of the fact that patriotism was still a rudimentary feeling throughout the period under notice, we may find it in the indirect testimony of two great historians—*Froissart* who wrote at the close of the fourteenth century, and *De Comines* who wrote at the beginning of the sixteenth. *Froissart* was the brilliant interpreter of the spirit and ideals of the aristocracy of his time ; but, set panegyrist of them though he is, it never occurs to him to commend any of his heroes for self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of their country. The idea of patriotism, in fact, is not in his book. There is but one kingdom he knows, the Kingdom of Chivalry—in which every doughty knight, whatever his race or country, was a free-born subject. As for *De Comines*, who is such a striking contrast to *Froissart* in all his modes of thought and feeling, he gave in his own conduct a practical illustration of the little regard in which he held the claims of country. Solely in the interest of his own personal fortunes, he deserted his natural sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy, at a critical juncture in his affairs, and gave his services to that sovereign's most deadly enemy, Louis XI. of France. From these considerations, then, it would appear that in indicting Scottish nobles for lack of patriotism, we are in fact arraigning them for a crime which was at least common to their class, and which it is, in truth, pointless to lay specially at their door.

The other count against them—that of insubordination against their rightful kings—may be regarded as commensurate with that which we have just been considering—their alleged lack of patriotism; and what has been said of the one charge equally applies to the other. The nobles of every country deemed it their right to rise against their kings when their privileges were infringed, and no other means of redress was open to them. The traditional attitude of the feudal nobility to the Crown was, in point of fact, entirely distinct from the attitude of the clergy and the people. For the clergy an anointed king was a sacred being, designated by heaven for his function. He continued the office of Saul and David; it was sacrilege to touch his person, and impiety to question his authority—so long as it was sanctioned by the Church. In the eyes of the people, the sceptre was the divine symbol of the royal authority; the throne, the fountain of justice. The feudal noble had no such exalted notions of the person of the prince. For him he was not the sovereign, but simply the suzerain, the head of the system of which he was himself a member, and, therefore, only *primus inter pares*. It is true that kings had come to impose themselves as sovereigns as well as suzerains over all classes of their subjects, but the original relation was never forgotten by the class of the nobles, and they never failed to reassert it when they had the power. Even into the seventeenth century both French and Scottish nobles, Protestant as well as Catholic, found the opportunity of reminding their kings of the original bond between them. The French nobility in the reign of Louis XIII. and the Scottish nobility in the reign of Charles I. convincingly proved to these kings that they had not forgotten the traditions of their order.

Thus far we have only been seeking to understand the conditions which underlay the action of the Scottish nobility. But the more important question remains, What was the general tendency of their action in the development of the

country? Had it no beneficent result on the well-being of the Scottish people, no saving influence on constitutional liberty? An adequate discussion of these questions would require much larger scope than a single lecture, but a few points may be suggested for consideration, and be it remembered that we are still concerned with the atrocious two centuries preceding the Reformation.

It would certainly be a large assumption to maintain that in the strife between king and noble, the king was always right and that the noble was always wrong. In the reign of Robert III., one of his Parliaments passed an Act which is thus suggestively described: 'The misgovernment of the realm to be imputed to the king and his officers.' After all due allowance for the exaggerated language of statutes, the 'misgovernment' must have been sufficiently serious, as an Act of a previous Parliament of the same king speaks of 'horrible destructions, herships, burnings, and slaughters commonly done through all the kingdom.' But this was, in greater or less degree, the condition of the country throughout the feeble reigns of Robert II., Robert III., and James III. That the miseries were mainly due to the weakness of these kings is proved by the simple fact that under the vigorous rule of James II. and James IV. order and peace were firmly maintained throughout the country—the Highlands always excepted. As a remedy for misgovernment, the Parliament already mentioned, following the example of the French States-General, enacted that the king 'to excuse his defaults' should summon his officials before his Council and charge them with their misconduct. Whatever may have been their motives, the barons who passed this Act must be credited with going to the root of the evils from which the country was suffering.

In another action of the nobility they were undoubtedly in the right, and the kings in the wrong. In the interests of France rather than in the interests of his own kingdom,

one Scottish king after another insisted on leading an invading host into England, and in almost every case with disaster. On such an expedition David was taken at Neville's Cross, and the payment of his ransom was an incubus on the country for half a century. Had James IV. listened to the advice of his barons, Scotland would have been saved the calamity of Flodden. Once and again the Duke of Albany, who acted as Regent during the minority of James V., would have crossed the Border in the interests of Francis I., and was only prevented because the barons refused to follow him. James V., who married two French wives in succession, would have repeated the enterprise of his father, and the discreditable Rout of Solway Moss was the result of the hereditary policy of the Scottish kings, consistently opposed by their refractory nobility.

But the attitude of the Scottish baronage to their kings may be regarded under a wider aspect, and one that reveals a principle in their action which was to be of potent effect to the close of the constitutional history of their country. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was the universal endeavour of kings to make themselves the absolute masters of their subjects. In England the endeavour resulted in the Tudor despotism, in France and Spain in a government of the same pattern. The nobles of Scotland, we may be sure, saw what kings were driving at in other countries, and they had the will and the power to check the process in their own. The English lawyer, Sir John Fortesque, writing in the fifteenth century, says of the King of Scots 'that he may not rule his people by other laws than such as they assent unto.' That the Scottish constitution could be thus described must undoubtedly be put to the credit of the nobles, for the Commons did not count as a force in the legislative action of the country. To the Scottish nobles it was due that this idea of a monarchy limited by the will of the subject maintained itself in Scotland long after it was ignored or forgotten in other countries. Not

till the reign of James VI. did any Scottish sovereign succeed in making himself a ruler after the type of Henry VIII. or Francis II., who issued his mandates with the formula—‘Such is our royal pleasure.’ James VI., even before his migration to England, substituted government by his Privy Council for government through the Estates, and the precedent was exactly followed by his successors, Charles I. and Charles II. But the conception of a limited monarchy for which the nobility had contended was never forgotten in Scotland. It was in accordance with this conception that the Parliament which met in 1641 during the struggle of the Covenant enacted that all the Officers of State should be chosen by the king with the advice and approbation of the Estates, and it was on the same foundation that Fletcher of Saltoun based his patriotic appeals in the Parliament of the Revolution. Deplore as we may, therefore, the turbulence of the Scottish nobility during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it is yet to them that Scotland owes that tradition of constitutional liberty which was finally assured by the Revolution of 1689.

A few words remain to be said regarding the action of the Scottish nobles during the period of the Reformation and the century and a half that followed it. We have been long familiar with the picture of the typical Scottish noble of the Reformation. As he has been commonly represented, he was actuated by but one motive in all his conduct—the desire to lay his hands on the spoils of the ancient church. If such were, indeed, his only incentive, he was at least not alone in his sins, for precisely the same charge is brought against his class in England, Germany, and France. But the truth is that this is too simple a method of treating such a complicated thing as human nature. We remember the saying of Hazlitt that no man ever acted from a single motive, and the saying is as applicable to a class as to the individual. It is an assumption we are not justified in making, to say that nobles like

Lord James Stewart, and the Earls of Argyle and Glencairn, who were chiefly responsible for effecting the change of religion, had no sincere conviction that they did what was right in the interests of truth and the interests of their country. But waiving the question of motives, regarding which the historian does well to be reticent, we cannot overlook one incontrovertible fact ; for good or ill it is to the Scottish nobles that we largely owe the Reformation. In Scotland, still essentially feudal, there was no other power that could have effected a revolution which so completely wrenched the nation from its past. Without the support of the nobles the zeal of Knox and his brother reformers could not have accomplished it. The inhabitants of the chief towns all but unanimously favoured the Reformation, but they were powerless to take the initiative without their natural leaders, and as society was then constituted, these leaders could only be the nobles. In Scotland, it is to be remembered, it was in defiance of the sovereign that the Reformation was accomplished ; and, had the nobles as a body taken sides with the Crown, the reforming movement in Scotland would have been as abortive as it proved to be in Spain.

The decisive influence of the nobles in affairs of religion is equally conspicuous in the ecclesiastical struggles of the seventeenth century. By the beginning of that century they had from a variety of causes become changed creatures ; they had, in fact, undergone the process which had already taken place in the other kingdoms of Europe. In these countries the intractable feudal baron had been transformed into the obsequious courtier whose chief ambition was to bask in the sunshine of the royal presence. The Scottish noble in his travels saw the splendour of foreign courts, and the grace and accomplishments of the representatives of his own order, and he realised that there was a life more attractive than his grim isolation in his hereditary keep. Thus the Court laid its spell upon him, and henceforward it was to royal

favour and not to his sword that he looked for the advancement of his interests. And James VI. had effectual means in his power to foster this new disposition in his nobility: he gorged them with the Church lands which an Act of Parliament, passed in 1584, had definitely annexed to the Crown. Then it was seen how little the Presbyterian ministers could help themselves when the nobles were detached from their interests. Had the nobles been on their side, James would never have succeeded in his policy of imposing Episcopacy on his Scottish subjects.

But, as was to be convincingly proved in the reign of James's successor, the claws of the nobles had not been thoroughly pared. Their hereditary instincts, the memory of their former privileges were too deeply ingrained for them to submit tamely to the sweeping measure with which Charles I. began his reign in Scotland. By his famous Act of Revocation Charles recalled all the grants of the Church property which his father had so profusely squandered among his courtiers. It is true that Charles offered what he considered an adequate compensation, but this was not the opinion of the class who were mainly interested in his measure. For a time, indeed, they were constrained to accept the terms which their royal master imposed on them, since the days were gone by when they could levy their retainers in mass, and beard him in his own palace. But the opportunity speedily came when they could show him that they were still the same race who had dictated terms to his ancestors and brought them to their knees. By the imposition of Laud's Service-Book, Charles roused the national feeling which produced the National Covenant, and for the time reduced the Crown to impotence. But in the case of this revolution, as in the case of the Reformation, it was again through the joint action of nobles and commons that these results were accomplished. Mighty as the tide of national feeling was, it would have expended itself in vain, had it not been directed and concentrated by the action of

the chief nobility. Here, again, the question of motive recurs. Were the nobles as a body mainly influenced by the desire to recover their arrested domains, or were they sincerely convinced that the Covenant was a righteous protest against a king who had overstrained his prerogative? However this may be, it is at least an indisputable fact of our history, that without the collaboration of the nobles neither the National Covenant nor the Solemn League and Covenant would have been brought to birth by the Scottish people.

The power of the nobles for good or evil is continuously illustrated to the close of the constitutional history of the country. As the conflict between Charles and his people developed, the instincts of their class again prevailed. By the domination of the Church and the domination of the people they saw the privileges of their order threatened as they had been previously threatened by the king. Now, therefore, they threw themselves on the side of the Crown, and with the result that their defection proved the temporary ruin of that Presbyterian policy of which the Covenants had been the triumphant expression. Under the reigns of Charles II. and James II. they are hardly recognisable as the ancient nobility of Scotland. Now, indeed, their teeth were drawn and their claws effectually pared. Such of them as chose to make themselves the agents of the policy of their kings were salaried and nominated officials, who had no option but to give effect to the royal pleasure.

But before their story closed, they were yet to give signal proof of their predominant influence in the country. In the Convention that met in Edinburgh after the flight of James VII. the great majority of them declared for William of Orange, and their action decided that, so far as Scotland was concerned, the Revolution was to prevail. Had that majority cast its sword on the side of Dundee, in all probability Scottish history would have followed a different course. But the last action of the Scottish nobility was perhaps the most memorable and

momentous in their devious and chequered history : to them we mainly owe the constitutional union of the Parliaments of England and Scotland. In the last Scottish Parliament which expressly met to deliberate on the articles of the treaty, the votes of the representatives of the burghs and the shires were equally divided, while the vote of the majority of the nobles was cast for Union. Had that vote not been given, the Union must at least have been postponed, and the result of delay on the conflicting interests and the seething passions of the hour both countries would alike have had occasion to regard with well-founded apprehension.

From this survey of the successive action of the Scottish nobles, one conclusion at least is forced upon us : no similar class has played a more conspicuous and more decisive part in the nation to which it has belonged. Once and again they had the destinies of the country in their hands ; it was they who gave Scotland its limited monarchy ; the Reformation and the Covenants were largely their work, and but for them the Revolution and the Union might have had no place in our history. With this record of their action before us, can we doubt that in considerable measure Scotland owes to her nobility what she is to-day ?

THE RÉGIME OF THE LATER STEWARTS IN SCOTLAND

THE task I have essayed is a somewhat ambitious one. In the space of an hour I have undertaken to give an account of a great national struggle which from first to last covered a period of little short of a century. Of this struggle, however, it is to be noted that the principles at stake were few in number, that the stages in the struggle are perfectly definite, and that they easily lend themselves to broad and natural divisions. In such a rapid survey picturesque details must to a large extent be ignored ; only the outstanding actors can be named, and even in their case it cannot be expected that their portraits should be drawn at full length. The chief value of such a summary must consist in the selection of the significant facts, the important crises, the determining issues which gave a character to the period under notice. If such a survey does not afford opportunity for thrilling details, it may at least have the advantage of focussing central interests and presenting the great causes and effects in their simple sequence and operation.

It is one of the accepted axioms of the modern historian that no events in man's history have a perfectly definite beginning. The chain of cause and effect is infinite ; the antecedents of revolutions may be traced as far back as historical records extend. But, in the case of any specific phase of a nation's development, there is usually some watershed that marks with more or less precision the trend of events that went before and of events that came after. The subject before us is one of the most clearly defined chapters in Scottish

history. Within a given period certain national issues were raised and settled ; and as the result of that settlement the nation entered on a new phase of development which forms an entirely distinct chapter of its history. The special issue before the Scottish people from the close of the sixteenth to the close of the seventeenth century may be simply stated. On the one hand, we have a succession of sovereigns who believed it to be inherent in their office to determine the precise forms of religious creed, of church and civil government, which it was incumbent on their subjects to accept from them. On the other hand, there was a section of their subjects who held with equal strength of conviction that the oracles of God had been committed to them, that their creed and polity were of equally divine origin, and that their rulers only existed to give them effect. It was out of the opposition of these contraries that there arose the great controversy which pre-occupied the mind of Scotland for all but a century of the national life.

In the case of this special controversy there can be little difficulty in finding a starting-point. Had there been no change of religion in Scotland, had the majority of the Scottish people chosen to remain faithful to the Church of Rome, the controversy could, in fact, never have arisen. In adopting Protestantism as its religion, the nation placed itself in a new relation to its rulers which involved all the questions that afterwards arose between the two parties. To understand the long contention, therefore, we must refer to what may in strictest truth be called the central fact of the national history. It was in the year 1560 that a crowded meeting of the Scottish Estates declared the religion of Rome abolished, and adopted as the national confession of faith a creed which in the main had been adopted by all the Churches that had broken from Roman Christendom. So far as our present purpose is concerned, the point to be noted regarding this action is that it was performed without the consent of the

reigning sovereign. It is further important to note that in the eyes of all Mary's successors the character of this initial act compromised Protestantism in its very birth. In the opinion of James VI., Charles I., Charles II., and James VII., it was the prerogative of the prince alone to determine what the religion of his subjects should be. But the subjects of Mary, or, at least, a prevailing section of them, had set up the new religion on their own authority, and had maintained it in despite of the known sympathies of their actual sovereign. From the very beginning, therefore, Scottish Protestantism found itself in antagonism to the dynasty under which it had to make good its hold on the nation. On both sides there was a predisposition to misunderstanding, and neither party ever lost its suspicion of the other. By Presbyterians and Episcopalians alike the three immediate successors of Mary were all at one time or other suspected of leanings to Roman Catholicism as the religion that was most in harmony with their notions of the Divine Right of Kings. On their side, these three kings sufficiently showed their suspicion of Protestantism by their method of treating it. James VI. spent all his strength in setting up Episcopalianism, but it was an Episcopalianism which in the first and last reference was a strictly official religion, wholly dependent on the Crown in respect of its rites, its doctrines, and its polity.

After the lapse of more than three centuries it seems to us that the success of Protestantism in Scotland was assured from the first. But this was certainly not the conviction of the first generation of reformers. To the very last John Knox and his fellow-labourers lived in constant dread that their work would be undone ; and, in point of fact, their fears were fully justified by the circumstances of the time. From the condition of affairs both at home and abroad the chances were strong that Rome would recover its lost authority before many years had passed. We have not the materials for determining the exact proportion of Catholics and Protestants

when the ancient Church was abolished in 1560; but we should probably not be far from the truth in conjecturing that the Catholics numbered three to one of the entire population. When we remember, also, that three-fourths of the nobility were still Catholic, as was also the lawful sovereign of the kingdom, we can realise that even in the moment of its apparent triumph the prospect of the ultimate victory of Protestantism in Scotland was far from being assured. Not, indeed, till the year following the death of Knox in 1572—thirteen years after the legislative enactment that abolished the Church of Rome—was it definitely assured that Protestantism was to be the future religion of Scotland. In the year 1573, with the aid of English arms be it noted, the Castle of Edinburgh—the last stronghold of the party of Mary—was captured by the Regent Morton, who, whatever his shortcomings, was at least a staunch champion of Protestantism. But in its long contest against the royal authority Scottish Protestantism had acquired those characteristics which were to distinguish it in its future struggle against the Crown. It had gained its victory in the teeth of royal opposition, and it was prepared to maintain itself under the same conditions.

It is then with the definite triumph of Protestantism in 1573 that the chapter of the national history opens with which we are now immediately concerned. Eight years after that date (1581), mainly under the leadership of Andrew Melville, a General Assembly held at Glasgow took the step which was to determine the future of Scottish Protestantism. In that Assembly it was formally decided that Presbytery and not Episcopacy should henceforward be the polity of the national Church. The reigning king, James VI., was then only in his fifteenth year, and under the pressure of his advisers had given his consent to the momentous Act. But from the time that James began to think for himself he gave the clearest proof of the conviction, to use his own words, that Presbytery

'agreeth as well with a monarchy as God and the devil.' From an equally early period he showed that he was possessed with that conception of the kingly office to which he was so successfully to give effect, but which in the end was to prove so disastrous to his immediate successor. According to this conception, a king was at once a temporal and a spiritual ruler whose divine right it was to lay down the law regarding Church and State alike. In his own eyes James was at once king and pope, and a pope, it is to be observed, with even greater powers than the bishop of Rome; for, while the authority of the latter was limited by general councils, James only summoned councils that they might register his will and pleasure. The interesting question naturally suggests itself—how was it that James became possessed with notions of his prerogative which were entirely alien to the traditions of the kingdom which he inherited? In the fifteenth century a great English lawyer had thus written regarding the powers exercised by the King of Scots—'he may not rule his people by other laws than such as they assent unto'; and the dealings of the Scots with their kings are the sufficient commentary on the truth of the remark. Various reasons may be assigned for the novel conceptions that James formed regarding his rights as a king. There were predisposing causes in his personal character. If ever man was born a schoolmaster—a schoolmaster, that is to say, not of the ideal type, but such as he once existed in the popular conception—it was James. He was a pedant to the core, meddling and fussy about trifles, cased in self-conceit, and comically jealous of his own importance. But besides his predisposition to this whimsical autocracy, there were external causes which undoubtedly exercised a powerful influence on the mind of James. From the beginning of the sixteenth century there had been a tendency in the kingdoms of Western Europe towards the centralising of all powers in the hands of the sovereign. We see this tendency equally in Spain, England, and France.

As it happened, James, while still little more than a boy, was brought into contact with a person who was singularly fitted to teach him the lesson which he was so apt to learn. This was a kinsman of his own—Esmé Stewart, Lord of Aubigny, a naturalised Frenchman, but Scottish by descent. D'Aubigny came to Scotland from the Court of Henry III. of France—a prince who beyond all his predecessors was dominated by the purpose of making himself an absolute king. For several years D'Aubigny was James's inseparable companion, and obtained such ascendancy over him that for a time he was virtual master of the kingdom. It can hardly be an exaggeration to say that by the direction D'Aubigny gave to James's government, as well as to his personal character, he is more responsible than any other single person for the course of Scottish affairs till the Revolution of 1689. There was still another cause which may be assigned for James's extravagant notions of kingship—the attitude of the Protestant ministers towards the royal authority. What that attitude was, Andrew Melville once for all expressed in his historic speech to James in Falkland Palace. Telling him that he was 'but God's sillie vassal,' he seized him by the sleeve, and added, 'Sir, as diverse times before, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland; there is Christ Jesus and his kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom not a king, nor a head, nor a lord, but a member.' The effect of such a speech on a nature like that of James can easily be understood. Though he was lacking alike in moral and in physical courage, the whole course of his reign goes to prove that his pertinacity was invincible by any force short of positive terror. The stern monitions of Melville and his brother ministers only made him more obdurate in his notions of what was due to the Lord's anointed.

But, besides James's natural repugnance to Presbytery, he had special reasons for refusing to be a 'ministers' king.'

The supreme object of James from the time when he had a mind of his own was to be Elizabeth's successor on the English throne. But, if this object were to be attained, he had to consider other parties besides his Presbyterian subjects. He had to win the support not only of the English Episcopalians but of the English Catholics, who still composed at least a third of the English people. But to conciliate the English Catholics he had to prove that he was no enemy to the Catholics of his own kingdom, who were relatively as numerous as their brethren in England. Had he consented to become a Presbyterian king, all this would have been impossible. The true Scottish Presbyterian detested English Episcopacy, and it was his conviction that Scottish Protestantism would never be safe till Catholicism was stamped out of the land. By policy, therefore, by predilection, and by the influence of his most trusted advisers, James was drawn into antagonism against that type of religion which had been adopted by the most strenuous part of his people.

James and the ministers speedily discovered that nothing short of the absolute victory of one side or the other would decide their irreconcilable differences. Under the direction of the favourite D'Aubigny, James began his systematic policy of aggression against the Presbyterian settlement; and when D'Aubigny was forced to leave the country, that policy was continued under his successor in James's favour, the pseudo-Earl of Arran. The year 1584 is reckoned among the disastrous years in the annals of Scottish Presbytery. In a Parliament which met that year a series of Acts was passed which virtually made James the absolute master of the bodies and souls of his subjects. It is specially necessary to dwell on these famous statutes—the 'Black Acts,' as they were significantly called by the Presbyterian party—for in them was contained the whole programme of the later Stewart kings. Their purport may thus be summed up: 'The king was to be head of the Church as well as of the State; no assemblies

of the Church were to be held without his sanction ; bishops were to be appointed, and he was to have the appointment of them ; and, finally, no minister was to express his opinion on public affairs under pain of treason. To give effect to these enactments became the undeviating purpose of James, and to make them null and void the equally pertinacious endeavour of all good Presbyterians.

Unbending as was James's purpose, it was not for some years that he found himself in a position to put it in successful execution, but by the close of the sixteenth century he was all but undisputed master of his kingdom, alike in affairs of Church and of State. At no time in the previous history of Scotland had any of its kings attained such a degree of authority as the 'shambling pedant' who now sat on the throne. What able rulers such as James I., James IV., and James V. had failed to accomplish, their timorous and ridiculous successor had achieved without even once drawing the sword. Clergy, people, even that intractable nobility who had tormented the lives and reigns of his predecessors, were all brought to his feet. We naturally ask in wonder how such a king as James was able to accomplish such a master-stroke of policy.

The answer that has usually been given to the question is that on his accession to the English throne James became master of resources which enabled him to terrorise the subjects of his northern kingdom. It is doubtless true that as the ruler of two kingdoms James was placed in a more commanding position than any previous Scottish king. But the truth is that James became master of his Scottish subjects before his migration to England. In what way, then, was the great feat accomplished ? It was because certain means were placed in James's hands which had been at the disposal of no Scottish king before him. When the Roman Church was overthrown in 1560 it was by the joint action of the Protestant ministers and a section of powerful nobles. In the strife that followed

during the reign of Mary, an increasing number of the nobility identified themselves with the Protestant cause, and it was this combination of nobles and ministers that foiled Queen Mary and foiled James VI. in the earlier years of his reign. If James was to succeed in the end at which he was aiming, it was imperative that the coalition should be broken up, and he was able to effect this stroke in the simplest and most effective fashion. The game was placed in his hands by one of the most notable statutes ever passed by the Scottish Parliament. By that statute, enacted in 1587, it was declared that all the ecclesiastical property of the Pre-reformation Church, with some trifling exceptions, should henceforth be the possession of the Crown. Archbishop Spottiswoode has told us where the bulk of this vast acquisition went: it was scattered broadcast among such nobles and courtiers as James found it desirable to gain over as supporters of his policy in Church and State. A single sentence will illustrate the scale on which this distribution was transacted. Between the years 1587 and 1625 there were assigned to various lay persons, mostly nobles, the lands of twenty-one abbeys, seven priories, six nunneries, two preceptories, and two ministries. What the result of this policy was is signally illustrated by a casual expression in the diary of the Presbyterian, James Melville. After the death in 1588 of Archibald Earl of Angus—the ‘ministers’ king’ James called him—Melville tells us that there was not a single Scottish noble with whom he could hold friendly converse on religion. James could not have struck a more deadly blow at the Presbyterian party; and it was not till the great uprising which produced the National Covenant in 1638 that it temporarily recovered from it. This, then, was the position in which the Presbyterian party now found itself: they were deserted by the Protestant nobles by whose support they had triumphed in the past; of the people at large, at least one third remained Catholic—several of the most powerful nobles being of the same religion; and finally, to crown their

discomfiture, many of their own number had gone over to the enemy and were accepting the religion which James was prescribing for them. In words which even after the lapse of three centuries cannot be read without irritation, considering the man who uttered them, James gave triumphant expression to his sense of the completeness of his victory. 'This I must say for Scotland,' he told the English Parliament, with his smug self-complacency, 'this I may say for Scotland and may truly vaunt it: here I sit and govern it with my pen. I write and it is done, and by a Clerk of the Council I govern Scotland now—which others could not do by the sword.'

The nation being now under his feet, James had a free hand to carry out his theory regarding the relations that should hold between subjects and their rulers. What that theory was, is succinctly expressed in various Acts of the Parliaments that were summoned to give their formal sanction to the behests of himself and his successors. This theory was simply that he, James, was 'supreme governor of the kingdom over all persons and in all causes'—in other words, in matters temporal and spiritual alike the king was to be sole judge and disposer. The manner in which James put his theory in force was simplicity itself. He found the lever by which he worked in the Privy Council, in consultation with which his predecessors had administered public affairs. In their days, however, the Parliament had a voice in choosing members of the Council, who had formed a comparatively independent body. But James had drawn the teeth of the Scottish nobles, and he was able to pack the Council with nominees of his own, dismissible at his pleasure. The Scottish Privy Council, in short, existed simply to give effect to the decrees of its royal master; in James's own words—he governed Scotland by the clerk of the Privy Council. To this novel stretch of the royal authority the Scottish Parliament offered no formidable check. It had never been a coherent and effective body like the Parliament of England, and James devised a simple method of rendering

it hopelessly impotent. The Scottish Parliament was composed of the greater barons, of the higher clergy, of representatives of the smaller landowners, and of commissioners for the burghs. The nobles, we have seen, were his tools ; the higher clergy were his nominees ; and by bribery or constraint he secured satisfactory representatives for the burghs and shires. Parliament and Privy Council and municipalities, therefore, were alike effectually under bit and bridle.

But the one object that lay nearest to James's heart was the assimilation of the Scottish Church to the model of the Church of England—a model which he held to be the only one compatible with the kingly authority. For the accomplishment of this object two processes were necessary—the setting up of a bench of bishops with diocesan powers, which implied the effacement of Presbytery ; and the introduction of such forms of public worship as commended themselves to his royal mind as Christian and seemly. With the convincing means at his disposal, James had comparatively little difficulty in carrying through the first part of his programme. By a packed General Assembly and a packed Parliament, Episcopacy, name and thing, was formally sanctioned as the polity of the Church of Scotland. But it was when James took the further step of introducing novel rites and ceremonies that he received direct indication that he was going on a dangerous way. Even his own ecclesiastical advisers warned him that the country was not ripe for the changes which he proposed. But James was so conscious of the strength of his position that he would not be turned from his purpose. By a General Assembly that met in 1618, and a Parliament which afterwards met in 1621, the famous Five Articles of Perth, embodying James's notions of divine service, were declared to be the law of the Church of Scotland. It is necessary to bear in mind what these five articles were, as it was precisely the attempt of James and his successors to enforce them on the nation that was the main cause of the subsequent revolt against the Crown. The Five

Articles were: kneeling at communion, private communion in cases of necessity, private baptism in like cases, observance of the great annual festivals of the Church, and confirmation by the bishops. Not even the twofold sanction of Parliament and the General Assembly could reconcile the mass of the people to these ecclesiastical novelties; and to the close of James's reign all the efforts of himself and his advisers were ineffectual to make them kneel at communion or pay deference to the great festivals of the Church. As 'for our Church matters,' wrote Archbishop Spottiswoode, two years before James's death, 'they are gone unless another course be taken.'

At James's death in 1625, therefore, this was the position of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland. Presbytery was suppressed, and the Church was ruled by a bench of bishops, appointed by the king and bound to take their orders from him alike in doctrine, in the forms of public worship, and in the government of the Church. The Five Articles were likewise the law of the land; but it was a law that received scant obedience and ran counter to the deepest feelings of the majority of Scotsmen for whom religion was the master concern.

James VI. is certainly one of the oddest figures to be met with in the pages of history: perhaps the strongest condemnation that can be passed upon him is that historians may say what they please of him without offending the sensibilities of a single reader. In the case of Charles I., and even of Charles II. and James VII., they must count on giving offence whether they praise or blame; but at James VI. they may discharge what epithets they please and no one will repine. Yet it cannot be denied that in point of ability, of real understanding of the character of his Scottish subjects, of genuine interest in the affairs of his kingdom, James was far superior to any of his three successors. We have now before us the full record of his government in the thirteen volumes of the *Register of the Privy Council* that have been published in recent years, and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that these volumes

afford indubitable testimony to his industry, to his capacity, to his anxious interest for the welfare of his people. Yet, in spite of this pleasing testimony, James remains a personage whom it is impossible to like or esteem. As a man, he was lacking in the essential qualities that constitute manhood : he was neither true, nor courageous, nor generous. As a king, it was his fatal defect that his policy in Church and State was primarily conceived not in the interests of his people but in the interests of himself and his house, and his subjects fully understood the fact and estimated him accordingly.

James bequeathed his policy to his son and successor, Charles I., but he did not bequeath to him his Scottish caution. It was the boast of James that ' he knew the stomach ' of his Scottish subjects ; but Charles never understood and never tried to understand that very peculiar organ. From the very outset of his reign there was mutual misunderstanding between Charles and that section of his subjects to whom religion was the supreme business of life. His marriage to the Catholic princess, Henrietta Maria, was itself a step which compromised him in their eyes from the beginning. It was speedily seen that Charles was not to rule his Scottish subjects with the wary prudence of his father. He had not been a year on the throne before he gave intimation of a momentous enterprise, the execution of which, according to a royalist contemporary, was ' the ground stone of all the mischief that followed after, both to [Charles's] government and family.' This ' ground stone ' was what was known in the language of the time as the ' Act of Revocation,' which was nothing less than the greatest economic transaction recorded in Scottish history. Here we are only concerned with its strictly historical bearing, and this may be indicated in a single sentence. By the Act of Revocation, Charles revoked all the church lands that had been granted since the beginning of the reign of Mary, pledging himself to pay such an equivalent as should be fair and just. The class whom the revocation mainly affected was the greater and

lesser nobility, and from the first they viewed Charles's scheme with suspicion. They did not wish to part with their lands, on the possession of which their personal importance depended, and they were convinced that no compensation could make up to them for their loss. In itself the Act of Revocation was not intrinsically unjust ; in many respects it was in the interest of Charles's subjects at large. To the Scottish Church, in special, the Act proved a notable boon, since it gave the power to every heritor to possess himself of his own tithes, and by so doing put the stipends of the clergy on a secure basis. Nevertheless, as subsequent events were so signally to prove, this action was of the highest unwisdom in the interest of the Crown. The direct and immediate effect of the revocation was that it alienated the nobility from the King, and drove them to make common cause with the clergy on whom they had so long turned their backs. This, then, was the position of affairs when Charles made his famous visit to Scotland in 1633. Among the people there was wide-spread dissatisfaction at the enforcement of the Five Articles of Perth ; and, what was novel and ominous, the nobility as a class were either coldly suspicious or actively hostile. Charles's visit did not make affairs smoother : he urged on the process of revocation, and he pushed on one step further the anglicising of the Scottish Church. If Charles could have opened his eyes, he would have seen the unmistakable signs that trouble was brewing. At the same time, we can easily understand how he was misguided. Just as in the times of his father, Privy Council, Courts of Justice, and municipalities were all stocked with his creatures, whom he naturally supposed he would always have at his bidding. What he failed to appreciate was that the basis on which the power of himself and his father rested, was quaking to the foundation. It had been by disjoining the nobles from the clergy that James had set up his autocracy ; but the old alliance was again being renewed, and the past history of Scotland had shown what such an alliance could effect.

Only an occasion was needed to drive the new alliance into action, and the occasion was not long in coming. In 1637, four years after Charles's visit, appeared Laud's Liturgy, and the light was applied to the train that had so long been laid. The Liturgy went even beyond the Five Articles of Perth in its departure from Presbyterian forms, and, imposed as it was in this definite shape and by the royal authority without consultation of the mind of the Church, it brought to a head all the opposition that had been gathering for the last twenty years. All the objections to the detested volume were summed up in the description of it by the Presbyterian annalist Row: it was a 'Popish-English-Scottish-Mass-Service Book.' The book had no sooner appeared than the fire was kindled. The details of the struggle that ensued between king and nation are beside our present purpose: what is to be noted is that the question at issue was simply the assumption of James VI. that his subjects were bound to take their religion from him, and this remained the absorbing question till new conditions arose which gave a new direction to the national mind. Charles's double contention was that in the first place the assumption was just, and, in the second place, that he was only doing what his father had done before him. The contention of his revolted subjects was that the assumption was impious and that James had infringed the constitution in making it. There followed the National Covenant, when the nation, in Milton's words, 'roused herself like a strong man after sleep, and shook her invincible locks.' Then came the first Bishops' War, the triumph of the Covenanters, and Charles's unwilling and insincere concession of all their demands.

And then comes the dividing line in the eventful history. By an Act of Privy Council, now directed by the leaders of the insurgent party, the signing of the Covenant was made compulsory on the whole nation. The Covenanters had thus arrogated to themselves the very power which they denied to the Crown. It was the turning-point of the strife, and thence-

forward the nation was cleft in twain, though for several years to come the party of the Covenant may in strictest truth still be called the national party. From this moment began the first serious defection of the nobles, who at a later time were once more as a body to throw their strength on the side of the Crown. It would, of course, be a mistake to say that the defection was wholly or even mainly owing to the compulsory Covenant. There were, in truth, many causes that wrought the defection that was to be so fatal to the Covenant. There was the revulsion of feeling provoked by the misfortunes of Charles ; there were the old feudal ties between the Crown and the nobles ; there were the jealous rivalries that arose between the favourers of Montrose and the favourers of Argyle ; but above all there was the distaste of the nobility for a Church whose teaching and discipline were so unpalatable to the natural man, and whose ministers, mostly men of humble origin, insisted on regarding them as sinners like the rest of mankind. So swift and widespread became the defection that, had Charles only had to deal with his northern kingdom, the probability is that he would have succeeded in re-establishing his authority. But he was already deeply embroiled with his English Commons, and the Second Bishops' War ended as triumphantly for the Covenanters as the first. Henceforward Charles's main concern was not with the Scots but with his English Parliament, which by different courses he had forced into rebellion more formidable than that of his other kingdom. The alliance of the Scots with the English Parliament, embodied in the Solemn League and Covenant, drove another wedge into the national party. The alliance was, in fact, unhappy from the beginning. The cause of the Scots and the cause of the English differed in origin and differed in their national ends. The ground of the Scottish quarrel with the king was religion : the ground of the English quarrel was the constitutional point of legal taxation. The end of the English controversy was the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of the Com-

monwealth and Protectorate, while the Scots, on the other hand, were so profoundly attached to monarchy that we cannot imagine them dispensing with that form of government. They did everything in their power to induce Charles to become a covenanted king, and when he refused to accept the condition and afterwards met his doom at Whitehall, they turned to his son and offered him the kingdom on the same terms.

The triumph of Cromwell and the Independents revealed to the Covenanting Scots how deep a gulf separated them from their English allies. When Argyle came to terms with Cromwell, and sought to make common cause with him, the result was that the majority of the nobles and half of the nation declared for the conquered king. Then came the engagement of the Duke of Hamilton with Charles, in which the former found such large support in Scotland, that he was enabled to lead a Scottish army into England to fight the battles of Charles against the Parliament. The expedition was disastrous; Hamilton's army was cut to pieces and himself made prisoner; and then followed the execution of Charles and the triumph of Cromwell and the Independents.

As Charles had always contended, he had throughout his rule of Scotland only followed the precedents set by his father. Like James he had regarded himself as the divinely appointed head of Church and State alike, but Charles had not discerned the signs of the times. In different ways he had wrecked his cause in both of his kingdoms—a double failure, be it noted, which is the most convincing proof of his incapacity as a ruler of men. In both cases the causes of his failure had been the same. In the first place, he was dominated by a theory of the kingly office which his subjects of neither kingdom would accept; and, in the second place, he forfeited the confidence of both by making concessions which he again and again showed that he only made till opportunity should permit their withdrawal.

At Charles's death in 1649 this was how matters stood in

Scotland. The Marquis of Argyle, at the head of the main section of the Covenanters, directed the affairs of the country, but opposed to him were two parties, who between them were to effect the temporary ruin of triumphant Presbytery. The one party was that which, with Montrose as its most brilliant champion, had broken with the Covenant, and had cast its sword on the side of the Crown. The other party was found within the ranks of the Covenanters themselves. This party had bitterly opposed Argyle's alliance with the English Independents, and it was now to oppose with equal vehemence a new policy which appeared to him the only means of escape from the pass to which the kingdom had been reduced. In an unhappy day for themselves, Argyle and the main body of those who had supported the Covenant entered into negotiations with Charles, with the view of his accepting the Scottish crown as a covenanted king. The events that followed cannot but strike us as being of the nature of a tragi-comedy. ✓ Charles II., playing the part of a covenanted king, and the Covenanters taking him seriously, is assuredly one of the most ludicrous farces of history. But the solemn comedy resulted in equally solemn tragedy, for it involved the bloody days of Dunbar and Worcester, and the subjection of Scotland for the space of eleven years to a foreign power which had never before succeeded in establishing such dominion over her.

It is beside our present purpose to speak of that remarkable chapter in the national history, when under the government of the English Commonwealth and Protectorate the Scottish people knew peace, order, and justice in a degree they had never known under any of her native princes. Our concern is with the last two kings of the Stewart dynasty who were to sit on the Scottish throne, and who by carrying out to their logical conclusion the absolutist principles, first acted upon by James VI., once more provoked the revolt of the two nations, and on this occasion with disaster to their race.

At the Restoration of Charles II. in 1660 the one object of

himself and his advisers was to reproduce that state of things which existed previous to the national uprising caused by Laud's Liturgy in 1637. In what that state of things consisted we have already seen. Its central fact was that the government of the country should be conducted by the Privy Council, nominated by the king and bound to execute his decrees. As a pure form Parliaments might be called to give their sanction to acts determined upon by Charles and his councillors, but it was to be understood that when they were summoned, it was, in James VII.'s words, a mere act of courtesy on his part and wholly unnecessary. By one sweeping stroke all that had been achieved by the Covenanting party during the last twenty-four years was undone. The famous Rescissory Act made null and void all Covenanting legislation since 1637, and the constitution devised by James VI. was revived in its entirety.

What change had come over the spirit of the nation that it was once more so easily saddled with the yoke of absolutism? Perhaps the most comprehensive answer to the question is that the alternative form of government set up by the Covenanters was as impossible as the absolutism of the Stewart kings. It was, in fact, but another form of absolutism itself. It insisted on the imposition of the Covenant upon the nation, just as James and Charles had insisted on the imposition of Episcopacy. When it came to actual practice, the rule of the Covenant was found to produce an equally impossible situation. Argyle and the main body of the Covenanters were forced to make a compromise first with the Independents and afterwards with Charles, and the result had been that a section had cast them off as traitors to the cause of true religion. Thus the solid front presented by Presbyterianism was no longer possible. By the date of the Restoration, also, the greater and lesser nobility had gone over to the side of the Crown. It will be seen, therefore, how simple was the task of Charles in making himself such a king as his father and grandfather had been before him.

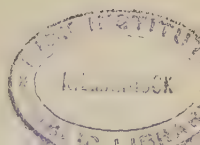
We have seen that under Charles I. a crisis had arisen which had completely changed the relations between him and his people. Where James VI. had succeeded, he had failed. So under Charles II. a new situation was produced which gave rise to a distinct chapter in the national history. Charles revived the constitution of James VI., but he had a problem to face which had not troubled James. Though the Covenant had come to nothing as a basis of government, the nation had not spent itself for it in vain. It had exercised the profoundest influence on the mind of the people—an influence which is with us consciously or unconsciously to the present day. It was with this spirit of the Covenant that Charles had to reckon in all his endeavours to make Scotland a dependency of England such as it had been in the days of his grandfather. In the south-western counties, and in other counties besides, this spirit of the Covenant had taken such possession of men's minds that it was for them the prime concern as regards both this world and the next. Dominated by such ideas, it was impossible that they could loyally accept a government whose very existence implied that these ideas were treason and impiety. To stamp out the Covenant and all its memories was of necessity the absorbing aim of Charles and his advisers. Two motives determined them in their policy of repression—detestation of the Covenant itself, and the haunting dread of such another revolt as had overthrown Charles I. It does not come within our present scope to relate the methods by which that policy was carried out. It is in brief the most pitiful, the most revolting, and at the same time the sublimest and most impressive page in the national history. It was not only that the means by which the Restoration government sought to compass its ends were detestable; the instruments by whom these means were employed stamp that government as equally devoid of humanity, self-respect, and responsibility. The succession of satraps who carried out Charles's commands could only have been allowed by a prince incapable of con-

ceiving the duties that pertained to his office. Between Middleton, the soldier of fortune, Rothés, the illiterate debauchee, and Lauderdale, the brutal cynic and voluptuary, it would be difficult to say which was most unfit to govern a serious people.

Leaving out of account, as we must, the atrocities of the persecutor and the endurance of the persecuted, we ask the question how was such a state of things possible in Scotland during the latter half of the seventeenth century? The answer must be that the Scottish people were cleft in twain by two conflicting principles which made a coherent state impossible. On the one hand, we have a Presbyterian Scotland maintaining that its creed and polity were alike of divine origin, and on the other hand, we have a king, supported by a powerful section of his subjects, maintaining with no less strength of conviction that the regal authority was of similar divine origin. These positions, it will be seen, were not merely incompatible: they were mutually destructive. Under such conditions the relations of ruler and subject were impossible. During the reign of Charles II. this fact was gradually brought home to an increasing number of Scotsmen of the most different shades of opinion. Consciously or unconsciously the Presbyterian ministers who accepted the successive indulgences offered them by the government were actuated by the feeling that some compromise was necessary to a settlement by which all parties should be allowed to live in peace. In the reign of Charles's successor, James VII., this lesson was driven home in such a fashion that the majority of the nation could not help learning it. It was in strict accordance with the principles of James VI. that his grandson, James VII., sought to impose Roman Catholicism on his subjects. According to James, a people was bound to take its religion from its king as the veritable vicegerent of Heaven, and as James VII. believed that the Roman Catholic religion was the true one, he consistently sought to make it the religion of his people. It was the logical

outcome of absolutism, but it reduced the principle to absurdity. It staggered even the staunchest upholders of the regal authority, and again, as in the reign of Charles I., the nation combined to overthrow a domination which placed them at the caprice of whoever chanced to be their ruler. On this occasion, also, England made common cause with Scotland, and the result was the Revolution of 1689 and the final casting out of the house of Stewart.

What had the Scottish people learned in its long travail of a century? The character of the settlement which placed William and Mary on the throne affords us the sufficient answer. It was the abandonment of absolute principles which by their very nature made an organised society impossible. The Revolution Settlement was a compromise which equally ignored the divine right of kings and the divine origin of Presbytery. When the Covenanters made their bargain with the English Parliament, it was their indispensable condition that Presbytery should be made supreme in both countries. It was a stipulation that did honour to their faith and their devotion ; but, as the course of events had lamentably shown, it was an impossible condition as the world then was. Very different was the spirit in which the men of the Revolution carried through their work. It was a spirit much less heroic, much less sublime ; in a plain worldly fashion they looked at the facts before them, weighed conflicting interests, and struck a balance which promised a stable equilibrium. The Revolution Settlement, therefore, meant the triumph of secular over religious considerations in the conduct of public affairs ; and, as the tragic history of a hundred years had conclusively proved, the triumph was necessary if settled peace and order were to prevail in the land.



THE UNION OF THE PARLIAMENTS OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND, 1707

ON October 3, 1706, the Parliament of Scotland met to deliberate on a momentous question—the question whether its own continued existence was in the interest of the nation it represented. Only on one previous occasion had it had a question of equal moment to decide. About a century and a half before, in the year 1560, the Scottish Estates had met in convention and almost unanimously voted that Protestantism should thenceforth be the national religion of Scotland. These two memorable sessions are connected by the strictest relations of cause and effect ; but for the decision of 1560 the question that had to be settled in 1706-7 could never have arisen. Had Scotland remained a Roman Catholic country, the Union of the Crowns could hardly in the nature of things have taken effect, and the Union of the Parliaments would have been excluded alike by the laws of God and of man. By their common Protestantism the two countries were united in a bond which drew them into relations which of necessity tended to become closer and more complex, and which gradually convinced both nations that they were committed to conjoint interests and a conjoint destiny. However widely different their national traditions and their national characteristics, despite their hereditary hostility, four centuries old, they had one common enemy whom they had never ceased to dread and against whom the instinct of self-preservation constrained them to joint action. This common enemy was Catholic Europe, in whose eyes Protestant Britain was an offence against Heaven, and a standing reproach and menace to the community of nations.

From the Union of the Crowns in 1603, Scotland and England had followed very different paths ; the form of Protestantism which each had adopted was of a very different type ; their national antipathies had not grown less ; and no action of Cromwell's had given more satisfaction to Englishmen in general than the punishment he had inflicted on the Scots at Dunbar and Worcester. Yet when James VII. made his deliberate attempt to impose Roman Catholicism on his two kingdoms, it was out of a common sense of danger that both rose simultaneously against him and engaged in the joint action which resulted in the Revolution of 1689 and the establishment of a Protestant succession. The pre-eminent cause, the fundamental condition of the Parliamentary Union, therefore, was that common Protestantism which bound the two kingdoms to present a united front against Rome and the Catholic Powers.

But not only did this common Protestantism make the Union possible ; it was also the main force in conserving it when it became an accomplished fact. For a full generation after its accomplishment there was not a class in Scotland which did not remain convinced that its own interests had been injured and permanently imperilled by the unequal yoke which the Union had imposed on the nation. The clergy lived in fear that a House of Commons and a House of Lords, whose members were mainly Episcopalian, would eventually seek the ruin of Presbytery ; the nobility resented what they deemed infringements of the privileges of their order, and the trading and commercial classes were indignant at the inequality of taxation which crippled their enterprise. Had the successors of James VII., the elder and the younger Pretenders, adopted the Protestant faith and pledged themselves to govern as Protestant kings, the probabilities were that either the Rising in 1715 or that in 1745 would have resulted in the restoration of the Stewart dynasty. Amid all the discontent of the nation, however, the dread of Rome held it fast to the Union as the

one safeguard of the Protestant religion, now bound up with the interests and aspirations of the great majority of the people.

It was the common Protestantism of the two kingdoms, then, that made the Union possible and conserved it through all the perils that endangered it. But there were immediate considerations that directly suggested to responsible statesmen that a joint House of Legislature would be in the interests of both countries. Let us look at the chief of these considerations which weighed with the English and Scottish statesmen who carried through a Union which, in the words of a contemporary, was 'a chimera of the English ministry.'

There was one conviction that had been forced on English and Scottish statesmen alike—viz. that the existing relations between the two countries could not continue. These relations had been tried both under the despotism of the last four Stewart kings and under the Revolution régime, with the result that the mutual antipathies of the two nations were never more violent than at the close of the reign of William. Throughout the reigns of the last Stewart kings Parliaments had only been summoned to give formal sanction to the royal pleasure. Packed as they had always been by the effectual methods devised by James VI., they did not represent the collective wishes of the nation. During the intervals between their meetings, the government was administered by the Privy Council, all of whose members were royal nominees, and which received its instructions from the king, advised by the Secretary permanently resident in London. It was the common saying, indeed, that the Secretary of the Council was the real 'King of Scotland,' and the Council itself was compared to a 'Turkish Divan.' Such was the state of things under the Stewarts. Under the rule of William such despotism was impossible, as the Revolution produced a number of distinct parties in Parliament, each with aims of its own, and ready on occasion to combine against the Government. In con-

sequence of this opposition William was constrained to make important concessions which materially enlarged its powers, but the grievance still remained that Scotland was governed from London and governed in English interests. With this retrospect of the history of the Parliament since the Union of the Crowns in 1603, we can hardly wonder that Scotsmen were disposed to question if its continued existence under the same conditions were really in the interests of the country. On the eve of the Union we find a patriotic Scotsman writing these remarkable words: 'Long ago it hath been a problem in Scotland whether Parliaments were useful or not.' But if Scotsmen had reason to be dissatisfied with the action of their Parliament, the Government, on its part, had no greater reason to be content with the existing conditions. In the successive sessions of William's solitary Parliament, his measures had been thwarted at every turn, and such was his experience of its refractory spirit, that only dire necessity constrained him to summon it. It was out of this experience, as we know, that he expressed the wish that Scotland and Scotsmen were both at the bottom of the sea, and out of this experience, also, that he gave his dying advice that the Parliaments of the two countries should be united with all possible speed in the interests of both.

The Tory Queen Anne was of the same mind as the Whig William, and in her first speech to the English Parliament she expressly suggested that Commissioners from both countries should be appointed to treat regarding the conditions under which the union might be accomplished. During the first years of her reign, however, the relations of the two peoples gave little promise of that consummation, which nevertheless lay in the immediate future. The Scottish Parliament, which was elected in 1703—the second year of her reign—proved even more refractory than that which had disturbed the stoical composure of William. Without consulting Scotland, the English Parliament had passed an Act of Settlement, which

devolved the Crown on the Electress Sophia and her heirs. By the majority of the Scottish Parliament this was regarded as England's crowning act of insolent domination, and, Whig and Tory agreeing, it passed the famous Act of Security, which, meant as a gage of defiance, proved through the irony of events to be the immediate cause of effecting the international compact. By the Act of Security it was declared that, twenty days after the death of the reigning sovereign, without issue, the Estates were to name a successor who should be a Protestant and a descendant of the House of Stewart, and should *not* be the person designated by the Parliament of England, unless under conditions that secured to Scotland complete freedom of government, of religion, and of trade. The Government at first refused to assent to an Act which virtually declared Scotland an independent country, but was at length constrained to give it as the lesser of two evil alternatives. Sanctioned by the Crown, the Act might now be regarded as the expression of the national will of Scotland, and as such it was interpreted by all parties in England. In the words of Defoe, the Act of Security 'put Scotland into a posture fit to be treated with, either by England or by any other nation.' It was, in truth, the menace of this second alternative that first aroused in English statesmen a sense that Scotland could no longer be treated as a dependency. 'Scotland,' in Defoe's quaint words, 'began to be talked up in the world a little.' So profoundly convinced were all Englishmen of the menace implied in the Scottish Act that the Tory House of Commons and the Whig House of Lords with one accord took up the challenge. In both Houses Bills were carried in terms and spirit as unflinchingly defiant as that of the Scots. The Bill of the Commons, which was eventually adopted by both Houses, bore the significant title: 'An Act for the effectual securing the Kingdom of England from the apparent dangers that may arise from several Acts lately passed in the Parliament of Scotland.' By the terms of this Act, unless the Crown of Scotland were

settled by Christmas Day of 1705, all Scotsmen would thenceforward be regarded as aliens, and all importation of Scotch cattle, sheep, coals, and linen be prohibited. More prudent or more calculating than the Scottish patriots, however, the English Parliament offered an olive branch along with the sword. By the same Alien Act the Queen was empowered to appoint Commissioners to negotiate a union between the two countries, which meanwhile seemed on the brink of international hostilities.

Equally under the despotism of the Stewarts and under the régime of the Revolution, therefore, the existing relations between the two countries had been found intolerable. In the interests of both, some new arrangement was imperative that would put an end to a situation which was a permanent menace to peace and a scandal to responsible statesmen. But, if a new arrangement was to be effected, there could only be a choice of two alternatives—either some form of union, or complete separation of the uncongenial yoke-fellows. We know which of the alternatives was adopted: let us then consider what general causes made it at once possible and desirable, and let us first consider the causes which operated in the case of our own country.

As we know, there had been previous attempts to effect a union of the Parliaments of the two countries. It was a cherished ideal of James VI. on his accession to the throne of England, and he had taken steps to realise it. During the rule of the Commonwealth it even became for a time an accomplished fact; and during the reign of Charles II. the project was again revived. But in the way of these attempts there was an insuperable difficulty which only the development of public opinion in both countries could remove. Differences in religion, partly the result of political conditions and partly inherent in the idiosyncrasies of the two peoples, created a sundering gulf which no promise of material advantage could avail to bridge. As Andrew Marvell wrote in 1667:

‘Though kingdoms join, yet church will kirk oppose;
The mitre still divides, the crown does close.’

Throughout the 17th century, though in England in less degree than in Scotland, religion had been the main pre-occupation of the most strenuous section of the people, and had been the main concern of statesmen. By the later Stewarts Episcopacy was regarded as the only form of ecclesiastical polity compatible with the dignity and security of the throne, and their rule in Scotland was largely occupied in seeking to make that polity prevail. During the reign of James VI. his religious policy overshadows every other interest; it was religion that occasioned the revolt that resulted in the two Covenants and the overthrow of Charles I., and during the reign of Charles II. two-thirds of the public business (so we are told by a contemporary statesman) were concerned with religion. Thus, throughout the greater part of the 17th century, religious and theological considerations dominated the public mind and determined the counsels of statesmen. But towards the close of the century there were significant indications that a change was passing over the national spirit, and that new interests and new aspirations were arising in Scotland as in other countries.

If we seek for an explanation of this revolution in the national ideals, we may find it in two causes—one peculiar to Scotland itself, the other operative in most of the countries of Western Christendom. As the result of a policy mainly determined by considerations of religion, the Scottish people had been gradually taught that, at the stage of development which they had now reached, such a policy was no longer possible if a stable and acceptable rule was to be established in the country. On the one side, there had been the sovereign maintaining the divine origin of Episcopacy and employing all his resources to enforce it on his people, and, on the other, there had been a strenuous portion of his subjects holding the divine origin of Presbytery, and prepared, when the opportunity came, to impose it on the nation at large. The religious absolutism of James VI. resulted in the ruin of his son; the similar policy of the Covenanters resulted in the Restoration; and James VII., carrying the

policy of his predecessors to its legitimate conclusion, sought to bring back Rome, and lost himself and his House in the attempt.

Thus it had been brought home to the Scottish people that religious absolutism was incompatible with a stable rule, and that other considerations than the divine origin of this or that form of ecclesiastical polity must determine the public policy. And in the spirit and action of the Scottish statesmen of the Revolution we have a convincing illustration of the lessons which had been learned from the woful experience of the century and a half that had intervened since the national change of religion in 1560. One of the most momentous questions which the Revolution statesmen had to solve was—whether Episcopacy or Presbytery was to receive the sanction of the State. Hitherto the question had been given a simple answer by whatever authority had chanced to be in the ascendant. In their hour of triumph the Covenanting party had imposed Presbytery on the nation as the divinely ordained form of Church government, and had even made the attempt to impose it on England and Ireland besides; and at the Restoration Charles II. had set up Episcopacy, at once on the ground that it was of divine institution and as the only form of policy consonant with kingship. The Scottish statesmen of the Revolution were influenced by no such absolute considerations; they set aside Episcopacy and put Presbytery in its place for the simple reason that it had given its support to the Revolution and promised to be its strongest stay. Expediency had in fact displaced absolute principles in the conduct of public affairs, and under this new régime the relations of the two kingdoms could be adjusted on a secular and not on a theological or ecclesiastical basis.

Thus by the failure of government on theocratic principles Scotland had been conducted to secularism as the only basis on which a national policy was possible, and, as it chanced, there were forces at work in the world at large which influenced her in the same direction. Since Scotland had become a

nation, it is to be remembered that she was always an integral part of Christendom. All the organic changes she had undergone had, indeed, been primarily the result of this relation. When David I. gave her the framework of feudalism and the medieval Church, he only followed the example of the other countries of Western Europe, and, but for Luther and Calvin, she would have had no Reformation. But throughout the seventeenth century the leading nations of Europe—notably England, France, and Holland—had entered on a new phase of development, and, as in the past, Scotland was bound sooner or later to follow them. This new development was the growth of the commercial spirit, and the consequent international rivalry for the markets of the world. Throughout the seventeenth century England and Holland were engaged in a permanent contest for the leadership of the world's commerce, and England's wars with France, begun at the century's close, were wars for the same end. 'Trade,' wrote Fletcher of Saltoun about the time of the Union, 'is now become the golden ball for which all the nations of the world are contending.' And in using these words Fletcher implies that Scotland like other countries was bound to engage in the game. She had, indeed, given striking proof that she was already engaged in it. The disastrous Darien Scheme was *her* attempt to capture the golden ball for which all the nations were contending, and its historical significance is that it shows Scotland bent on becoming a commercial nation like her neighbours. What a change had come over her dream when it could be said by a contemporary that, since the signing of the National Covenant, there had been no such enthusiasm in the country as was shown by all classes in their eagerness to invest their savings in the ill-starred enterprise!

By this revolution in the national spirit, therefore, by this awakened desire to share in the world's goods, Scotland was prepared to make a bargain which would enable her to compete on fair terms with other countries. And in England, also,

the same transformation had been wrought in the national ideals. There too, at the close of the seventeenth century, church and religion no longer dominated all other interests, and on purely secular grounds the country was disposed to make terms which would turn to her commercial advantage.

Such was the general disposition of the two nations—by nations being always understood the most strenuous and intelligent sections of their peoples—when the Commissioners of Union met in the Cockpit in Whitehall on April 16, 1706. In nine weeks they had drawn up the terms of a Treaty of Union to be submitted to the decision of the Parliaments of the two countries. It is unnecessary here to specify all the heads of the Treaty and it is sufficient to bear in mind that the two main recommendations were the Union of the two Parliaments and community of trade. As the greatest opposition to the Treaty was expected from Scotland, it was arranged that the Scottish Parliament should first sit in judgment on its terms. The general circumstances in which the Act of Union was carried are among the most familiar in our history. Within the House and without it the opposition to the Treaty at times seemed to threaten civil war. Writing on November 19, 1706, the Secretary Mar declares that nothing prevents an invasion of Edinburgh but the season of the year and the bad weather. How far this hostility was worked up and how far it was real is a question which does not admit of a satisfactory answer. The petitions against the Treaty which were sent in from every royal burgh except Ayr are not decisive evidence of the feelings of the commercial classes in general, since we have it on the authority of the Jacobite Lockhart that they were for the most part prompted and even concocted by the agents of his own party. Nor are the riots that broke out in Edinburgh and other towns any proof that the majority of their intelligent citizens were at heart opposed to the Treaty. In the case of certain classes, however, the hostility was undoubtedly genuine and can easily be understood. For Jacobites and Epis-

copalians the Union would be a crushing calamity, as it would for ever cut off the hope of the restoration of the Stewarts. But it was from the National Church that the most formidable opposition was anticipated by the government officials charged with the conduct of the Treaty. 'One thing I must say for the Kirk,' wrote the Secretary Mar on the 7th of November, 1706, 'that if the Union fails, it is owing to them.' What the Church naturally dreaded was that a united Parliament, in which the majority of both Lords and Commons would be Episcopalians, would sooner or later seek the ruin of Presbytery and impose a common polity on both kingdoms. In the drafting of the Treaty the question of religion had been deliberately excluded as the safer policy—the implication being that the Union would leave the national churches intact. But to the weaker church this was no sufficient guarantee of its future security, and so formidable was its opposition to the Treaty that the Government was constrained to make terms for its support. The result was the Act of Security which, as far as words could go, safeguarded for all time the National Church of Scotland as it had been established at the Revolution. According to the terms of this Act, which, though not embodied in the Act of Union, was to form an indissoluble part of it, the Church as it then existed was 'to continue without any alteration to the people of the land in all succeeding generations,' and the four Universities, whose professors must be members of the national Church, were similarly to remain 'within this kingdom for ever.' Even this solemn pledge for the immunity and perpetuity of their Church did not satisfy the majority of the clergy, most of whom, we are told, were men of 'little experience and warm zeal'; and throughout the prolonged debate they did their utmost to incite their parishioners against the Union. The sager ecclesiastical heads, however, and notably the sagacious Carstares, had been won over, and their support was of the first moment in passing the Treaty into law. Though opposed at every step by different

parties in the House, the Articles were at length successfully carried after nearly three months' debate ; and on January 16, 1707, the Commissioner Queensberry touched the Act of Union with the royal sceptre, and at the same time, as inviolably bound up with it, the Act for the Security of the national Church. On the 19th of March following, amid a salvo of guns from the Castle, the exemplified Act was read in the House, and ordered to be recorded. As the Chancellor Seafield handed the Act with his signature affixed to the Clerk of the House, he is said to have exclaimed, ' Now, there's ane end of ane old song.' It was a form of words employed by his countrymen when they would relieve a sigh with a jest.

The Union had thus been carried in the teeth of persistent opposition both within and without the Parliament House, and it was with no exuberance of joy that its consummation was greeted by the country at large. A correspondent writing to the Earl of Mar from Edinburgh on the 1st of May—the day when the Treaty came into force—uses these significant words : ' There is nothing so much taken notice of here to-day as the solemnity in the south part of Britain and the want of it here.' True, the bells rang from the steeple of St. Giles to signalise the occasion, but the same correspondent notes as of dubious omen that the first tune they played was, ' Why should I be sad on my wedding day ? ' The first experience of the results of the Union was indeed fitted to justify the gloomiest auguries as to the future relations of the two kingdoms now bound to a common destiny. In their zeal to carry the Treaty the legislators of both countries had neglected the most ordinary precautions to ensure its harmonious working in the first stages of its action. Hardly had the Act come into force when one needless cause of friction after another arose to make both nations repent their bargain. By one of the terms of the Treaty it had been arranged that English revenue officials should be quartered in Scotland to superintend the new fiscal operations of which the natives of that country

had no experience. In any case the duties to be performed by these strangers must have rendered them obnoxious, but the promiscuous mob of officials who were sent across the border, and the manner in which they went about their task, awoke a lasting indignation throughout the whole country and, as much perhaps as any other cause, created a settled antipathy to the Union. By another clause in the Treaty Scotland was to receive the sum of £398,085 10s., known as the Equivalent, as a compensation for her losses sustained and losses to be incurred. But the money was so long in coming that it was generally believed that England was disposed to break her bargain. 'The Equivalent is so much despaired of here,' wrote one from Edinburgh, 'that among the vulgar the greatest part believe it is gone to Spain, and some believe that the bridge of Berwick is fallen with the weight of it, and all is lost.' At length, on August 5, the precious burden, for the Scots had refused to accept the money in notes, conveyed in twelve waggons, and guarded by 120 Scottish dragoons, reached the capital, where in spite of doubled guards a riotous mob vented its spleen by stoning the convoy.

The legislation of the United Parliament during the remaining years of Queen Anne was not calculated to remove the fears of the weaker country that she had been entangled into a disastrous alliance which must end in the ruin of her remaining institutions and the obliteration of her nationality. The nobility, by whose vote the Union had been carried, were exasperated by the Peerage Bill, which placed them at a disadvantage with the peers of England. In the Act restoring lay patronage, and in the Act of Toleration, the clergy of the national church saw a deliberate purpose of eventually establishing Episcopacy in Scotland. In the Malt Tax and other legislation the trading community saw at once a breach of the Union treaty and a sacrifice of their interests to the advantage of England. Thus all classes in the country had their own

grievances and their own fears as the immediate and direct result of the unhappy compact. It seemed, therefore, that when in 1713, the year before Anne's death, the leading Scottish statesmen, Whig and Tory alike, combined to undo the Treaty of Union they were acting in accordance with the general desire of the country. As we know, the motion for dissolving the Union, brought forward in the House of Lords, was lost only by a majority of four. Yet Jacobite and Whig alike, who supported the motion, were well aware what the dissolution of the Union must inevitably involve. 'If we saw a possibility of getting free of the Union without a civil war,' wrote the Earl of Mar, 'we would have some comfort, but that, I am afraid, is impossible.' The day of the dissolution of the Union would indeed have revealed to Whig and Tory the essential antagonism of their respective ends, and the result could hardly have been other than was anticipated. Again would the issue have been joined between Protestantism on the one hand and Roman Catholicism on the other, for in this light would the conflict have been regarded by all Presbyterian Scotland. On more than one subsequent occasion the Union was to be in apparent peril. If at the death of Anne the schemes of Bolingbroke had succeeded, the Stewart would have been restored, and his restoration would have involved a new relation between the two kingdoms. In the Risings of 1715 and 1745 the Union was again threatened, but English and Scottish Protestantism on both occasions proved its safeguard. The restoration of the Stewart meant the restoration of Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism was vitally bound up with the secular as well as the religious interests of both peoples.

Yet for many years to come it was rather the dread of what would follow on its dissolution, than a conviction of the benefits it had brought, that held Scotland fast to the Union. The promise of immediate commercial prosperity had been the golden bait with which the statesmen responsible for the

Union had sought to reconcile her to the loss of national independence. An improved coinage and free trade with England and her Colonies were to be the means through which the harvest was to be promptly and bounteously reaped. Proportioned to her deceived hopes, therefore, was her disappointment at the actual result, which seemed the immediate and direct consequence of her reluctant copartnership. So far from entering at once into a golden harvest, what she appeared to have reaped was the loss of her trade with France, heavier duties, and heavier taxation, exacted with a rigour unknown in her previous history. As late as the year 1742, Lord President Forbes, the most enlightened public man of his day, drew up, at the request of Lord Tweeddale, the Scottish Secretary of State, a statement regarding the national revenue which is sufficiently explicit. 'The revenue,' he says, 'is in such a declining state that the usual expense of the civil government can hardly be answered.' The only cheering fact to which he can point is the promising condition of the linen manufacture; the fishery, he says, 'has totally failed for many years'; the foreign trade of Glasgow had been seriously injured by the Spanish War, and, as for the rest of the country, it is 'worse than nothing.' Never was there less coin in the country within living memory, and paper was the only currency to be seen. The expenses of the Government had been hitherto met by the duties from the Customs and the Excise, but for many years the Customs had produced 'little worth speaking of,' and the Excise had fallen to a half of its former value.

Such was the gloomy account which Forbes could give of the state of Scotland thirty-five years after the Union. Yet we now know that for some years before Forbes wrote the country had already entered on that path of material prosperity which was to conduct to such splendid results by the close of the century. New industries had been introduced; foreign trade, especially with the American colonies, had vigorously begun, and such towns as Glasgow, Greenock, and Paisley, already

gave promise of their future greatness. When the middle of the eighteenth century was turned, the evidences were indisputable that Scotland had become one of the competitors for the world's trade, and that she was likely to hold her own in the competition.

In conclusion, the question naturally suggests itself—what benefits have accrued to the two nations from the union of the Parliaments in 1707? The answer must be that the one supreme benefit it brought to both was strength and security as the result of their combined resources. The indispensable condition for successful trade, as the past had already shown and the future was still more significantly to show, was strength of arm, to attack, to defend, and to maintain. It was by sheer force that England wrested the commercial supremacy from the Dutch in the seventeenth and from the French in the eighteenth centuries. The governing motive, therefore, which induced England to seek the Union was the desire for increased security and strength. Had Scotland become an independent kingdom, retaining her ancient hostility, England would have been seriously crippled in the course she was to run. Scotland, in the phrase of the time, would have remained the back-door through which England's enemies might at all times have found a convenient entrance. On the other hand, Scotland, to hold her own in the conflict of international interests in which the nations were already engaged, would have required a fleet and army, the maintenance of which would have overstrained her resources and permanently retarded their development. Relieved from this necessity and no longer dominated by theological preoccupations, she was at liberty to pursue the new paths on which she had entered at the Revolution, and only under such conditions became possible her growth in material prosperity and her contribution to the world's thought which mark the close of the eighteenth century as the most distinguished period of her annals.

FOUR REPRESENTATIVE DOCUMENTS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

THERE are two ways in which we can measure the course a nation has run from its emergence into history. We may trace its course in the material imprints it has left behind it in the land where it has had its habitation. When we think of the monastic huts of St. Columba, composed of wattles and clay, and of the magnificent ecclesiastical edifices which arose in the reign of David I., we have brought home to us with the vividness of picture the length the nation had come during the intervening centuries. In the contrast between a modern Clyde steamer and the skiff made of wickerwork which brought St. Columba from Ireland to Iona, we have a commentary on the development of a nation's life which appeals to every mind. So, if we look at the framework of society in the successive periods of the national history; if we compare, for example, the social order as it existed in the reign of David I. with the social order of to-day, we take in with all fulness what progress means.

The development of a nation, as indicated by these palpable reminders, lies patent before us on the page of history. But there is another way of regarding the national development which is not so visibly evident, which is apt to be overlooked, and which, nevertheless, is of greater moment, as revealing the deepest springs of national life. What were the conceptions of man's relations to his fellows, to life itself, to the general scheme of things, which dominated the mind of the nation at the different periods of its history? It is only with these conceptions before us that we can adequately interpret the

outward and visible signs of a nation's life at any given period. Behind the social order, behind the forms of government, which meet our eyes, these conceptions are the impelling and directing forces that brought them to birth. They inspire and regulate the policies of statesmen; they make what is called public opinion, and they determine the ideals to be found in all art and literature. 'Our culture,' as Emerson says, 'is the predominance of an idea which draws after it the whole train of cities or institutions.' In the study of any period of history, therefore, the primary condition for the understanding of it is an acquaintance with the mental attitude of the community to those ultimate questions which men have continued to ask from the beginning. It is by their respective attitudes towards these questions that one age is essentially differentiated from another. In the history of Christian Europe we distinguish between the early Middle Age, the later Middle Age, and the Modern Age, and we make the distinction because these periods are respectively characterised by the different constructions they have put upon the meaning and aim of the life allotted to man.

If the study of history has any ultimate aim, it must be the interpretation of these fundamental conceptions as they have found expression in the forms of society which men have fashioned for themselves—in the great movements which have implied new departures in the history of humanity. The largest gain we can derive from the study of history is the apprehension of the action and reaction of ideal conceptions and their practical application to the natural needs of everyday life. One of the great masters of history has said that the highest result of its study is the acquired ability to appreciate the differences between times and countries, nations and races. And if Bacon's saying be true that 'histories make men wise,' it must be from this understanding of it that wisdom must come.

But how shall we most directly lay hold of those fundamental

conceptions that determine the actions of communities at the different stages of their history? In a mere narrative of what any nation has accomplished we are apt to miss the deepest forces that have impelled it along the course it has followed. We may have the closest acquaintance with its successive forms of government, with its revolutions, with its achievements in arts, with its social conditions at any period of its history, and yet never realise the underlying ideas of which they are the visible expression. We are interested in these things for themselves and take them as ultimate facts, while their explanation and real significance escape us.

There is one means at our command which more directly than any other puts us in contact with any age that we may choose to make our special study. By the period when a people has arrived at self-consciousness (and it is only at this period that it becomes the subject of history in the strict sense of the word) it usually finds expression in some form of literature which embodies what are its animating ideals and aspirations. And in every subsequent period of its history it finds similar expression for its changing conceptions of its own highest interests and of the means by which these interests are most adequately realised. In the case of every historic nation we have a succession of these memorials which are the permanent expression of the deepest thoughts and feelings of the age that produced them. In the case of Scotland we have a series of literary monuments, dating from the beginning of her history, which mark the successive stages of her development with a clearness of definition that enables us to distinguish the one from the other with all desirable precision. Let us look at these successive productions as they appear at the different periods of our national history, noting them only as they represent the deepest convictions and the highest conceptions of the generations that have created the Scottish people as they exist to-day.

For our present object the first of these productions is of

special importance, inasmuch as the express intention of its author was to convey to his contemporaries precisely what we are in search of—the highest ideals then conceivable of human life and destiny. It is the *Life of St. Columba* by Adamnan, the first literary whole that directly bears on the history of Scotland. The date of its composition is about the close of the seventh century, and it is the product of that type of Christianity which Columba had brought from Ireland to Iona, thence disseminated throughout the country to the north of the Forth. In the character and action and teaching of Columba were embodied for Adamnan the ideal man in the sight of his fellows and of his Creator. A biography, as we now understand that form of literature, would in Adamnan's eyes, we may imagine, have been a profanation of the sanctity which was the enveloping halo of Columba from the cradle to the grave. What he does present to us is a figure created by the popular imagination during the century that elapsed between the death of the saint and the date when he addressed himself to commemorate him. And what is the type of human character and what the view of the nature of things that Adamnan puts before us as representing the highest conceptions then attainable by man? Columba's pre-eminent claim on our admiration and reverence, according to Adamnan, was the supernatural power which he could wield at will to effectuate his objects. He owed this power, indeed, to the sanctity which commended him to Heaven, but it is in virtue of his superhuman gifts that he is set before the world as an exemplar of the most exalted humanity. Why Adamnan presented Columba primarily under this aspect is sufficiently illustrated in such records of the time as have come down to us. The most persuasive means at the Christian missionary's disposal for the conversion of a heathen prince and tribe was to convince them that he could perform more wonderful works than any magician of their own. Loigaire, an Irish king, had the intention of putting St. Patrick to death; but, when St. Patrick

overcame the Druids in a thaumaturgic competition, Loigaire thought it prudent to come to terms with him. So, as Adamnan records, Columba converted Brude, King of the Picts, and through him his people, by miraculously throwing open the doors of Brude's palace which had been shut in the saint's face. We see, then, the world in which Adamnan and his generation moved. Laws of nature, as we understand them, did not exist. That stones should swim, that water should be converted to wine, that the dead should be raised to life—all of which acts Columba performed—seemed to them no more unnatural than walking or sleeping.

Four centuries of the national history elapse before we meet with another document which, like Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*, embodies the ideals of the age when it was produced. During these intervening centuries great changes had taken place in the territory to the north of the Tweed. In the days of Adamnan that territory was mainly divided between four peoples, the Angles of Lothian, the Britons of Strathclyde, the Scots of the modern Argyleshire, and the Picts to the north of the Forth—each more or less successfully maintaining their independence of the other. By the date when the period closed, the mainland north of the Tweed was nominally under the rule of one prince—known to history as Malcolm Canmore. During the same period equally revolutionary changes had been effectuated in the Church. Even in the life-time of Adamnan the Church of his master Columba was threatened by a peril which may explain the tone of plaintiveness which pervades his life of the saint. The Church of Rome had triumphantly entered on the course which was eventually to end in the inbringing of all Christendom to her fold. She had already brought within her jurisdiction all the lands of Western Europe, and by the date when Adamnan reached middle life she had asserted her predominance in the different kingdoms which then composed the future England. In 664, at the Synod of Whitby, Oswiu, King of Northumbria, identified himself with

the Roman Communion, with the immediate result that the clergy of the Irish Church were banished from his dominion. Within little more than half a century, only a few years after Adamnan's death, the Church of Rome had extended her conquest to the north of the Tweed. In 710 Naitan, then King of the Picts to the north of the Forth, followed the example of Oswiu, and expelled the Columban clergy who clung to the teaching of their founder. Seven years later Rome triumphed in Iona itself, the ecclesiastical centre of the Irish Church in Scotland.

At the close of the eleventh century, the period to which our second document belongs, the Church that acknowledged the Bishop of Rome as its head was thus in the ascendant in the territory which we must still call North Britain, and this ascendancy marks a new departure in the national history. Her peoples—we cannot yet designate them a nation—were now definitely brought within the pale of that *unitas catholica*, which had been the goal of the policy of Rome since it had a definite policy, and, as the result of this affiliation, they became an integral part of Christendom, and sharers in its secular and religious development. But for our present object, what we have to note is that the ascendancy of the Roman type of Christianity implied other ideals, other aims of collective endeavour, than those set forth by Adamnan in his life of Columba. What these ideals and aims were, we find enunciated in one of those documents which show us, in Hamlet's words, 'the very body of the time, his form and pressure'—the *Life of St. Margaret*, wife of Malcolm Canmore, composed most probably by her confessor, Turgot, subsequently Bishop of St. Andrews.

Turgot's *Life of St. Margaret* is as remote from a biography in the modern sense as Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*. It is a character sketch, not the narrative of the events of a life. But, such as it is, it possesses a higher historical value than if it had told us with minutest detail all that had happened to her from

the cradle to the grave. For what Turgot has given us is the ideal of a life which, in his conception, should be the exemplar to all such as desired the assurance of the joys of Heaven. When we compare his ideal with that of Adamnan, we realise that we are in another world from that of the community of Iona. It is not only that Adamnan's saint was an apostle and Turgot's a queen, and, therefore, called to different functions. Turgot's conception of a dedicated life embraces a far wider sphere of rational activities than is suggested in the pages of Adamnan. Specially noteworthy are the different attitudes of the two biographers to the relative importance of miracles as notes of sanctity. 'I leave it to others,' writes Turgot, 'to admire the tokens of miracles which they see elsewhere. I admire much more the works of mercy which I perceived in Margaret; for signs are common to the good and the bad, whereas works of piety and true charity belong to the good only.'¹ But Margaret's activities, as Turgot records them, were not restricted to works of piety and charity; she evidently had a worldly side to her nature on which he might have enlarged had he so chosen. For example, he incidentally mentions that she encouraged intercourse with foreign traders, and specially with those who brought gay garments cut in the latest fashions; she introduced a magnificence into the Court which transformed the royal household; and she persuaded her consort to institute the service of those high officials, selected for their noble birth, who were now attached to the royal person in all the continental Courts. 'All this,' adds Turgot, 'the Queen did, not because the honours of the world delighted her, but because duty compelled her to discharge what the kingly dignity required'; and, in point of fact, these worldly interests were for Turgot only the inevitable distractions from higher concerns which are incident to mortals in every station during their pilgrimage in a sin-stricken world. What he desired to commemorate in Margaret as worthy of

¹ Forbes-Leith's translation.

all imitation was the example she set of strenuous dutifulness as a daughter of the Church. The passage of Scripture on which we are told that she 'meditated without ceasing' was a verse from the Epistle of James: 'What is our life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away.'

Here we have the *Weltanschauung*, the conception of the true meaning of life which it was the object of Turgot to inculcate in his sketch of the character of Queen Margaret. And it was the conception that dominated the whole stage of culture covered by what we call the Middle Ages. The true profession of men during their life on earth is that of 'penitents and mourners, watchers, and pilgrims,' and in this profession the Church is their indispensable aider and comforter. When we cast our eyes over the surface of medieval society, indeed, we hardly receive the impression that its successive generations were greatly more concerned about their ultimate salvation than those of any other period of the world's history. The history of Scotland during the Middle Age is hardly a history of the reign of the saints. Nevertheless, it was this conception of life as 'a vapour which appeareth for a little while' that underlay the medieval society. It is the system of education devised by any community that most adequately expresses the ideals by which it lives. And what was the nature of the educational system devised by the Middle Age for the conservation of the established order? It was in the first and last instance conceived in the interests of the Church—that is, of the institution which was the life and soul of the generations over which it ruled. Instruction was given through the Church and for the Church, and its all-pervading aim was education, not for this world, but for the next. The teachers were churchmen; the subjects taught were prescribed by the Church, and these subjects were expressly chosen in view of the religious life. Thus, the life of Queen Margaret by Turgot may be regarded as marking the beginning of a new stage in the national culture.

So far as Scotland is concerned, the conception of man's destiny set forth in Turgot's book was that by which the nation lived from the eleventh to the sixteenth century when a new vision of human life and its possibilities dawned on Western Europe. In the case of Scotland we have no difficulty in fixing on the document which most distinctly signalises the opening of the new era. In the *First Book of Discipline* are laid down the foundations for the future national life as its authors conceived its highest interests. On the face of it, indeed, the *Book of Discipline* would seem to set forth essentially the same conceptions as those of Turgot. In the view of its authors, man's earthly life is a state of probation, and his chief aim should be to assure himself of salvation in the next. For the attainment of this end it was the necessary condition that he should know the truth as it was to be found in the Church as it had now been purified from human error. Here is the opening section of the Book which lays down the scheme of national education. 'Seeing that the office and dutie of the godly magistrate is not only to purge the Church of God from all superstition, and to set it at liberty from bondage of tyrants, but also to provide to the uttermost of his power how it may abide in the same purity to the posterities following, we cannot but freely communicate our judgments with your Honours in this behalf.' We see the primary intention of the authors of the Book when they presented to the civil magistrate their ideal of a system of national education; it was to ensure the conservation of that body of doctrine which they deemed indispensable for man's right guidance on earth and his salvation hereafter. In presenting their scheme, moreover, they claimed the same power as the Church they had displaced—the power to dictate and regulate public instruction in all its departments and all its degrees. 'Above all things,' Knox wrote in the year of his death, 'preserve the kirk from the bondage of the universities.'

Thus it might seem that in their fundamental conceptions the

authors of the *First Book of Discipline* were at one with the Church they had displaced. In point of fact, however, whatever their dogmatic views of the place of religion in life, they could not escape the influences of the age to which they belonged, and on these influences their educational scheme is the significant commentary. The governing fact of the new time had been the decisive emergence of the laity as a power in society and in the body politic. There had been two main causes, as we know, for this appearance of the laity as a factor that had now to be reckoned with in the leading states. The development of the towns in the different countries had produced communities of citizens with intelligence enlarged by their own civic life and by intercourse with other rival communities bent on objects similar to their own. The other cause had been the invention of printing, but for which the religious revolutions effected in the various countries would have been impossible. Previous to the invention of printing, instruction was gained only from persons and places sanctioned by the Church, and it was thus made easy for the ecclesiastical authorities to stamp out heretical opinion wherever it appeared. But when books were scattered broadcast among the peoples, it was no longer in the power of any organisation to suppress the expanding ideas regarding the possibilities of human life which implied the opening of a new page in the world's history. 'As formerly,' wrote a contemporary, 'the apostles of Christianity went forth, so now the disciples of the sacred art [of printing] go forth from Germany into all countries.' Thus, at the date when the Scottish reformers drafted their scheme of national education, they were face to face with conditions which had not existed in the Middle Age. Throughout that age a middle class did not exist; the Church, the king, and the feudal nobility controlled and directed between them all that concerned the main interests of the State. What was now happening in Scotland, however, showed that these conditions no longer obtained; it was by the support of the middle class in

the chief towns that the ancient Church had been overthrown and the new Church put in its place. If the new Church was to maintain its existence, therefore, the class which had been largely instrumental in creating it must be organised, educated, and directed on lines favourable to the Church's permanence. The task before the authors of the *Book of Discipline*, therefore, was the creation of a national system of instruction, which would include every class, and so produce the conditions requisite for the formation of an intelligent public opinion. Such an ideal was incompatible with the very being of the Church of the Middle Ages, and it is in the attempt to realise this ideal that we find all the difference between the age that had gone and the age that had come. It is true that underlying the educational system which is sketched in the Book we have the same conception of human life as 'a vapour which appeareth for a little while,' that dominated the Middle Ages, but, in point of fact, the provisions which it lays down for all classes of the people ensured a secular training for the service of society and the State which in the end was bound to react against the Church itself.

As we know, the scheme of national education sketched in the *First Book of Discipline* was never realised, but by this inner contradiction—the opposition between the theological intention of its authors and the secular developments it involved—the scheme may be regarded as embodying the tendencies of the age that was to follow. What specifically characterised that age—in the case of Scotland extending from the middle of the sixteenth to the close of the seventeenth century—was the gradual substitution of material for religious concerns as the main preoccupation of the different peoples. In England during the seventeenth century secular interests came to override concern for religion and the Church; Holland, the battle-ground of religion in the sixteenth century, became a nation of traders in the seventeenth; during the latter half of the same century Louis XIV. made the Church in France a

mere personal convenience, and according to the historians of Germany the secularising process in that country dates from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 which closed the Thirty Years' War. In the case of Scotland during the same period it is the successive ecclesiastical struggles that are most prominently thrust on our attention, but this is largely due to the fact that the contemporary historians were churchmen whose interests were restricted to the sphere of religion. In the Acts of Parliament and in the Privy Council Register of the period we see another side to the national life. From these records we find that economical questions, bearing on the material well-being of the country, came more and more to engage the minds of those responsible for its administration. If in the first half of the seventeenth century we have the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, in the second half we have the Report on Trade presented by the merchants of the country to the Privy Council in 1681—a report which was based upon keen observation of the conditions requisite for a flourishing home and foreign trade.

The period between the Reformation and the Revolution of 1689, therefore, may be regarded as a period of transition during which theological and secular interests were in continuous conflict for the dominant place in the national policy. By the opening of the eighteenth century the result of the conflict was no longer doubtful. If we desire a conclusive proof of the fact, we may find it in the Treaty of Union in 1707 which gave Scotland and England one legislative body. In the framing of that Treaty it was the material interests of both countries that dominated the minds of those who were responsible for it; in the times of the Covenants such a treaty would have been possible only on the condition of religion being its basis.

With the eighteenth century, therefore, we enter on another stage of development in the national history; and for that century, also, we have a document which embodies its conceptions of man and his eternal relations as distinctively as the

previous documents we have been considering embody those of the respective ages to which they belong. This document is a book which is assured of permanent interest so long as a Scottish nation endures ; it is the *Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle, Minister of Inveresk*. Unconsciously to himself, Carlyle, in the account he has given of his own life, has interpreted the tendencies, the tone of thought and feeling of his age, with an expressiveness which leaves nothing to be desired. As we read this book, we realise that the world and his fellow-mortals are seen by him in lights which in previous centuries of the national history had not dawned on men's eyes. His intellectual attitude and his conception of life's duties and responsibilities are as characteristic of his age as were those of Adamnan and Turgot of the ages to which they belonged. And, be it noted that, like Adamnan and Turgot, he also was a cleric. In considering the characteristics of his gospel, therefore, we have a further interesting commentary on the development of the national culture from the earliest stage of which we have the documentary history. What are the distinguishing notes in Carlyle's book which so eminently mark it as a product of his age ?

Carlyle was not a great original thinker who by force of mind and character gives a new direction to traditional currents of thought. The interest that belongs to him lies in the fact that by his natural qualities he represents in discreet moderation the prevailing tendencies of the age in which he lived. Fully to appreciate those tendencies we have to go beyond the limits of Scotland, for it was not in Scotland that they originated. Carlyle's life (he was born in 1722 and died in 1805) corresponded with the period when ideas, which had their birth in the seventeenth century, came to their full fruition in all the countries of Western Europe. It was in France that these ideas had their origin, and it is usual to associate their first decisive appearance with the publication of Descartes' *Discourse on Method* in 1657. In that discourse was pregnantly indicated an attitude of mind

which for a century and a half was to determine not only men's speculations, but their habitual tone of feeling regarding matters which specially appeal to the emotions. Descartes' evangel, for such it was in his eyes and in those of the thinkers who followed him, was the application of reason to human experience in the entire range of its content. It was to the explanation of nature that the new method was applied in the first instance, but in due course it came soon to be applied to man and his history. The particular form of demonstration which commended itself to Descartes and the philosophers of the eighteenth century as the one adequate *organon* was that of mathematical proof, and their preference for this mode of reasoning has a sufficient explanation. It was in the science of astronomy that the most impressive discoveries were made in the seventeenth century; and the two great discoverers, Galileo and Newton, were mathematicians. Before the close of that century we have the *Ethic* of Spinoza, in which the rationale of the universe is set forth in a series of *quasi*-mathematical formulas. In 1734 were published Voltaire's *Letters on the English*, in which he expounded the Newtonian system with such effect that in France, the country with which Scotland was in direct intellectual contact, *Newtonism* became the current designation for the attitude which came to dominate the French mind. 'Is it not amazing,' Horace Walpole wrote in 1764, 'that the most sensible people in France can never help being dominated by sounds and general ideas? Now everybody must be a *géomètre*, now a *philosophe*.'

It is in the designation *philosophe*, as Walpole understood it, that we have the explanation of the characteristics of the class which Carlyle so suggestively represents. For the *philosophe* the whole content of human experience was explicable by reason, and should be controlled by reason. Before the days when men made this discovery, they had been led astray by vague feelings which had engendered the hallucinations responsible for the follies and crimes written so large on the page of history.

In the future, guided by the light of reason, humanity would avoid its past errors, and, adjusting itself to the realities of life on earth, fulfil its proper destiny. Here it is that we see the fundamental distinction between Carlyle's attitude towards life and its responsibilities and that expressed in the three previous documents we have been considering. For Adamnan and Turgot and the authors of the *First Book of Discipline* man's life on earth was only a preparation for another ; it was a condition to be endured, not to be enjoyed, by him whose thoughts were wisely ordered. For Carlyle, on the other hand, the present life was a good thing in itself and to be made the most of while we have it. He has nowhere given us a precise statement of his theological creed, but from his incidental remarks and the general record of his life we can infer what was his attitude to the mysteries of the Christian faith. In what his editor, Hill Burton, calls a 'characteristic passage,' we have a sufficiently piquant indication of his opinion as to the essentials of religion. He had been requested by an exalted personage to recommend a minister for a church in Berwickshire, and he writes as follows: 'I think it of great consequence to a noble family, especially if they have many children, to have a sensible and superior clergyman settled in their parish. Young is of that stamp, and might be greatly improved in taste, and elegance of mind and manners by a free *entrée* to Lady Douglas.' In these words we have the ideal of the type of religion which under the name of 'Moderatism' dominated Scotland during the greater part of the eighteenth century. It was a type determined by the prevailing intellectual attitude of the age which demanded that all human beliefs should be brought to the bar of reason. Vague aspirations, spiritual raptures, uneasy heartsearchings—these were the vagaries of distempered and half-educated minds. 'It was of great importance,' is a remark of Carlyle's own, 'to discriminate the artificial virtues and vices, formed by ignorance and superstition, from those that are real, lest the

continuance of such a bar should have given check to the rising liberality of the young scholars, and prevented those of better birth or more ingenious minds from entering into the profession [of the Church].'

We see the length we have come in the history of the national development. We have seen in succession the varying ideals of the individual and the collective life as conceived by Adamnan, Turgot, the authors of the *First Book of Discipline*, and a Moderate minister of the eighteenth century. Behind the external history of the successive ages these ideals were the inspiring and determining factors, and only by bearing them in mind can we understand the policies of statesmen, the general drift of events, and the ever-changing adjustments of human society. One comment, consolatory or otherwise, as we may take it, is immediately suggested by what has been said. Each age is under the illusion that its own outlook is final and all-sufficient; Carlyle was as convinced as Adamnan that he saw human conditions under their true light. Yet before Carlyle's death in 1805, men had begun to see other visions than his. Reason was displaced from the throne he assigned to it, and in new forms and in new tendencies those elements of human nature, which he thought it desirable to suppress, asserted themselves with such triumphant force as to mark the beginning of still another stage in man's history.

SCOTLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

WHAT precise period are we to understand by the eighteenth century in Scotland? The French reckon their eighteenth century from the death of Louis XIV. in 1715 to their great Revolution in 1789; while in England 1689 and 1789—the dates of the two Revolutions—are generally accepted as the limits of the period. All such delimitations of human history must, of course, be more or less arbitrary, and are liable to be altered as the world changes its point of view. For example, the Middle Age, as we now define it, is not what was so regarded by the eighteenth century; as our knowledge widens and at the same time becomes more exact, there is a tendency to break up historical periods just as the astronomer with finer instruments breaks up the nebulae into individual heavenly bodies. Still it remains the fact that there are periods of history distinguishable from each other by certain broad characteristics that cannot be mistaken. We see these characteristics in the representative men of the time—in their prevailing mood and temper, in the subjects which interested them, in their manner of handling them. We have but to imagine any great man transplanted from one age to another to realise what is meant by the spirit of the age to which he belonged. Had Milton lived in the nineteenth century instead of in the seventeenth, could he have used the language he did in his controversies with Salmasius? Had David Hume been born in 1811 instead of in 1711, how different would his judgments have been on many things—on the historical import of religion among others. There *is*, then, such a thing as the ‘spirit of an age’ and it

may even be said that it is the historian's prime business to discover in what that spirit essentially consists. What are the representative facts, the leading tendencies, the main preoccupations, that mark off one age from another? In clearly discerning these and setting them forth in their mutual relations, the historian is helping us to understand at least one integral part in the history of the race. Is it not, indeed, the goal—probably the unattainable goal—of historical research to compass such a survey of man's history from the beginning as will enable us to detect and apprehend the successive 'notes' that have gone to fill out what the poet has called 'the great chorus of humanity'?

In the case of Scotland there are good reasons for fixing the years 1689 and 1789 as the limits of its eighteenth century. At either end of the period delimited by these years there was a new departure in the national life that sharply marks it off from what went before and what came after. The expulsion of the Stewarts in 1689 definitely closes an age which had its beginning so far back as the Reformation of religion in 1560. The dominant characteristic of that age had been the conflict between the Crown and the most strenuous section of the people regarding the type of religion that was to express the national ideal. The governing events of the time were all determined by religious and ecclesiastical considerations, equally on the part of nation and of ruler. It was religion that dethroned Mary and Charles I., religion that mainly influenced the policy of Charles II., and religion that cast out the Stewart dynasty in the person of James VII.

The year 1789 equally opens a new chapter in our national history. The extraordinary industrial development of Scotland throughout the eighteenth century had its due effect in quickening the mind of the people at large. In most of the important towns and in many of the villages there sprang up a class of artisans, mainly weavers, who early began to display the characteristics of their class. They were not content to accept the

opinions they had received from their fathers, and they discussed questions of politics and religion in a fashion that was fitted to disquiet the classes, who, with their vested interest in things as they were, regarded with alarm any suggestion that they might be changed or improved. When the ideas of the French Revolution reached Scotland, therefore, there was a numerous class among the people prepared to receive them, and the result was the beginning of that ferment which is signalled by the State Trials of Muir and other political reformers, by the Radical War of 1819, and eventually by the Reform Bill of 1832. In 1789, as in 1689, therefore, the nation made a new start in its history, and so the intervening period may fitly be treated as an epoch marked by characteristics specifically its own.

There is one outstanding characteristic which sharply distinguishes the eighteenth century in Scotland from the century and a half that preceded it—the predominance of secular over religious and ecclesiastical interests. At the Revolution of 1689 the policy of statesmen in establishing Presbyterianism instead of Episcopacy was dictated by no regard to supernatural sanctions, but simply by considerations of expediency. The disastrous Darien Scheme strikingly shows to what extent the Scottish people had now become imbued with the commercial spirit. From every class in the country many came forward to invest their last penny in the doomed enterprise. Not since the uprising which produced the Covenants had the nation been so moved as by the prospect of the material advantages that were to accrue from the visionary scheme of the settlement on the pestilential shores of Darien. At the period when the Covenants came to birth such a dream of purely material advantage would have been impossible as men's spirits were then pitched, and the change that had come over the nation's ideals was a signal proof that Scotland, like other countries, had entered a new stage of her development. In the case of the Union of 1707 we have another testimony to

the ascendancy of secular considerations in the conduct of public affairs. The weightiest reason that influenced the Scottish statesmen who advocated union was that Scotland would become a partner in England's trade, and would thus find herself on the high road to commercial greatness and prosperity.

The hopes of statesmen for a golden harvest that was immediately to follow the Union were, as we know, doomed for a time to bitter disappointment. The immediate fruits of the Union, it seemed, were only diminished trade and increasing friction with the sister country. Nevertheless, neither the disaster of Darien nor the apparent failure of the Union diverted the nation from the new paths on which it had entered. In spite of impediments, partly due to disadvantages at home and partly to the unequal yoke with England, trade, commerce, and manufactures became more and more the absorbing interest of a rapidly growing number of the population. By the year 1730 that material prosperity had fairly begun which by the close of the century was to transform Scotland into a commercial and industrial nation, and one of the competitors for the markets of the world. During the first half of the century the most sensational public events were the Risings of 1715 and 1745. There were many causes that doomed both of these attempts to failure; but, as economic writers now tell us, it was commerce and the modern spirit that were the most formidable obstacles to the restoration of the Stewarts. The fundamental conception on which the Stewart rule had been based—the divine right of kings, with its implication that, in spiritual and temporal things alike, subjects must accept the guidance of their rulers—was at once alien to the modes of thought that now prevailed and antagonistic to the free development of the national will and character. So it was that, in spite of widespread dissatisfaction with the Union, neither in 1715 nor in 1745 did the mass of the Lowland population show any disposition to make terms with the representatives of their ancient kings.

It is only what we should have expected that the secular spirit, as it manifested itself in material interests, should have had its own influence in the sphere of thought and speculation. And such was indeed the case in notable degree. In the intellectual tendencies of the first half of the eighteenth century we have unmistakable indications that the intelligence of the nation was breaking with its past, and was opening to ideas which must carry it far from its ancient moorings. In literature, in speculation, in religion itself, there began a play of thought which was unknown in the period previous to the Revolution. Take, for example, the poems of Allan Ramsay (1686-1758), the most prominent literary figure of the time. The theme of these poems is the purely natural man, devoid of all movements of soul or mind inspired by the Christian theology. Ramsay treats of men and women—their loves, their pleasures, their backslidings, their adventures, their misfortunes—as any Pagan poet might do. True, he was far from being acceptable to a large section of the community whose conceptions of life were bounded by the religious creed which they had inherited from their fathers. But the significance of Ramsay is that he appeared at the time he did, and that his writings appealed to an educated class which in the latter half of the century was to give to Scottish society its prevailing tone. The coterie—for as yet it was little more than a coterie—which surrounded Ramsay and applauded his genius—would have been impossible at an earlier time; and in this fact alone we have the sufficient proof that he belongs to another epoch than that of the seventeenth century.

Religion itself was not left untouched by the spirit of the time. It was now that the type of religion began to assert itself which, under the name of Moderatism, was to attain its full fruition in the latter half of the century. In its essential spirit Moderatism was an attempt to adapt Christianity at once to the tone of existing society and to the current thought of the time. The name Moderatism was peculiar to Scotland,

but the thing existed elsewhere under other designations. It was Bangorianism or Latitudinarianism in England, the *Aufklärung* or Enlightenment in Germany, and Newtonianism in France. Moderatism in Scotland was no doubt partly due to reaction against the Covenant theology, but that reaction is itself traceable to currents of thought of which Moderatism was only another manifestation. Throughout the seventeenth century, speculation in Europe had raised questions which touched the very foundations of the Christian revelation. During that century the Copernican theory, which deposes the earth from its central place in the universe, had taken full possession of the minds of thinkers and fundamentally influenced their speculations. Could Christianity, as it had hitherto been understood, hold its own in this overturning of the accepted order of nature? Thus it became incumbent on the champions of Christianity to discover new defences which they might set up against the attacks of its enemies. And they had a double task before them if their defence was to be successful: they had to justify Christianity both as a theology and as a religion. The line they took with reference to the Christian theology was to adapt it to ordinary human reason as the arbiter of all beliefs which the human mind was bound to accept; and in this attempt it was necessary to reduce the Christian mysteries to a minimum and to give the first place to the ethical system which was extracted from the Christian books. In the case of the Christian religion, as prescribing a code of conduct for its believers, the line taken was also that of accommodation. The standard of Christian living must be such as was compatible with the pleasures of the world, asceticism and spiritual excitement being assumed to be the most dangerous enemies of a reasonable faith.

Such were the tendencies of religious thought which began to manifest themselves in Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century, but which did not attain their full development till past its middle. As we know, the result was a cleavage

in the national religion which may be said to exist to the present day, and which is one of the central facts of the age we are considering. There were many interested in religion, both divines and laymen, for whom the Moderate attitude towards Christianity implied the surrender of all that constituted its essence as a divine revelation. Finding their sole foundation in the doctrinal system they had inherited from the Reformation, these persons maintained that to give up one mystery was to give up all, and that to make terms with the world as the Moderates proposed was to pervert religion into lifeless morality. Between these two religious types there could be no compromise, and the conflict that arose between them is one of the dominant facts of the century. On the one hand the Moderates, on the other, the party known to their opponents as the 'Highflyers' or the popular party, appealed to the nation as the true custodiers of the faith. As every Scotsman is aware, the struggle between them mainly turned on one question, the question of the rights of congregations to have a voice in the election of their own ministers. But this question has its historical significance only in the fact already stated—the essential opposition between the two parties in their conceptions of what Christianity is, and of the methods and agencies by which its gospel should be proclaimed. The struggle was bitter and protracted, and engaged the minds and hearts of many in every class of the people, but the fact to be noted in the present connection is that the controversy did not, like religious controversies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, involve political revolution. The State was no longer dominated by theological considerations; and the disputes of divines, however they might excite the passions of the people, had no influence on public policy. In this one fact, then, we have a notable illustration of the distinctive differences between the eighteenth century and the age that preceded it.

The first half of the century thus saw a new departure in

literature and religion, and it also saw a new departure in a sphere in which Scotland was to make a great name in the world—the sphere of speculative thought. From 1720 onwards, Ramsay of Ochtertyre tells us, metaphysical speculation began to take the place of theological and political controversy, and clubs were formed for the discussion of questions which it would have been perilous to raise not many years before. It was as late as 1697 that the divinity student, Thomas Aitkenhead, with the approval of the majority of the Edinburgh ministers, was executed for airing certain views on the Trinity. But the questions now raised went far beyond the speculations of Aitkenhead: the existence of God, the trustworthiness of human reason, the immortality of the soul; these and other kindred questions were debated with a freedom and publicity which less than half a century before would have summarily solved them for the adventurous disputants. A portentous birth was the outcome of these speculations. In 1739 appeared the *Treatise of Human Nature* by David Hume, himself a member of one of the debating clubs. The book, its author tells us, fell ‘deadborn from the press’; yet, as we know, the ideas it threw out were to determine the subsequent course of philosophic thought. The logical conclusion of the *Treatise* has been described as ‘intellectual suicide,’ a strange conclusion, as might appear, to have been reached in Scotland, which for nearly two centuries had been the peculiar home of dogmatic assertion on ultimate questions; yet, as we have seen, Hume only systematised and gave precision to modes of thinking which were current in Scotland in the earlier half of the eighteenth century.

Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature* was the first in a succession of works—each epoch-making in its own department—which were to give Scotland a unique position in the intellectual commonwealth of the nations. The list is certainly an imposing one, and, within the same period, without a parallel in any other country. Besides the philosophical writings of Hume

that followed the *Treatise*, there were Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, the Histories of Hume and Principal Robertson, and the book that drew the gaze of Europe to Scotland beyond every other—Macpherson's *Ossian*. Add to these productions in philosophy and literature the scientific discoveries of Black, Leslie, Hutton, Cullen, and John Hunter, and we have a tale of intellectual effort the more surprising when we remember that the total population of Scotland did not then amount to the number of two millions. 'It is an admirable result of the progress of the human spirit,' wrote Voltaire, 'that at the present time it is from Scotland we receive rules of taste in all the arts—from the epic poem to gardening.' The words were meant ironically, but they point to what was an indisputable fact, the intellectual activity of Scotsmen in every important sphere of thought and their original contribution in each of them.

It was the latter half of the eighteenth century that saw this flowering of the national spirit; and, when we speak of the eighteenth century in Scotland, it is this latter half we must have mainly in view. To that period, therefore, what follows will be directed.

It was in the period of repose that followed the '45 that Scotland, for the first time in her history, found the opportunity for the free expansion of all her resources. No convulsive struggle now distracted her; intercourse with England, in spite of lingering prejudices, became more frequent and cordial; the example and stimulus of other nations reached her more directly; and it was her good fortune to produce at this very time a succession of master-minds in the most important departments of human thought.

Turning first to her growth in material prosperity, we find the period marked by an increase in her various industries, by an extension of her trade, and by the construction of public works unexampled at any previous time. Take, for example, the case of the linen manufacture. For the year 1727-8 the

total value of the linen made in Scotland was £103,000; for the year 1770-1 the value was over £600,000. As the result of the war with the American Colonies, arose the cotton manufacture—the raw stuff being imported from the West India Islands. Most important, however, in the industrial development of the country was the utilisation for the first time of the country's stores of coal and iron. In 1760 were started the Carron Iron Works, which the traveller Pennant, who visited them in 1769, describes as 'the greatest of the kind in Europe,' and where he found 1200 men employed. In agriculture there was equally rapid development. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the methods of tillage were those of the Middle Ages; at its close Englishmen came to Scotland to receive lessons from her farmers. During the same period, also, the construction of public works was undertaken, which at any previous time could not have been conceived. After a labour of twenty-two years the Forth and Clyde Canal was completed in 1790 at a cost of £300,000. The deepening of the river Clyde at Glasgow, considered a stupendous work at the time, the construction of the Tay Bridge at Perth, and of the North and South Bridges in Edinburgh were other public works of which a previous age could not have dreamed.

Such was the growth of material prosperity in the period following the '45; but what of the development of opinion? After the death of President Forbes in 1746, says Ramsay of Ochertyre, 'a new tide of opinions set in strong,' and he tells us what this 'new tide of opinions' meant. 'At that time,' he says, 'Deism, apparelled sometimes in one fashion and sometimes in another, was making rapid progress in Scotland,' and the statement is amply borne out by other testimony. The evidence is, in fact, convincing that during the period of which we are speaking the prevailing type of thought—most strongly marked in Edinburgh—was a pagan naturalism, for which Christianity was a temporary aberration of the human mind. The fashionable mental attitude received curious illustration

on the publication of Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, expressly written to combat the positions of Hume. In view of the prevailing philosophical opinion, no Edinburgh publisher would venture to give it to the world ; and it was only by a ' pious fraud ' that it issued from an Edinburgh press. ' Absolute dogmatic atheism is the present tone,' wrote Dr. John Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Physic in the University of Edinburgh. In England there was a general opinion that Scotland was given up to infidelity ; and in that country Beattie's reply to Hume was received with far greater enthusiasm than in his own. In the House of Commons Thomas Townshend, afterwards Viscount Sydney, made eulogistic reference to Beattie's book, and took the opportunity to say that ' the Scots were not *all* freethinkers.'

It was amid these tendencies of thought that there arose in the Church what was called the ' New Moderatism,' to distinguish it from the less pronounced type which had appeared in the earlier part of the century. In the year 1751, Carlyle of Inveresk tells us in his *Autobiography*, ' the foundation was laid for the restoration of the discipline of the Church.' For Carlyle and those associated with him, the restoration of the Church's discipline meant a due subordination of its different Courts, involving the supreme jurisdiction of the General Assembly in all matters under dispute. The consummation of this ' discipline,' as we know, was the suppression of the claims of congregations to have a voice in the election of their ministers and the resolute enforcement of the rights of patrons to presentation. With the long controversy regarding this question which arose between the two parties in the Church, and which had its memorable issue in the Disruption of 1843, we are not now concerned. It is with Moderatism as a type of thought, as an attempt by a section of the Church to adapt Christianity to existing society that we are now concerned. What we see is that Moderatism was in its season a perfectly natural growth. We have noted what was the general

tendency of the educated opinion of the day—a tendency which carried men far away from dogmatic theology and Puritanism of life. In the view of the Moderates the problem of the Church was to present Christianity under such an aspect as would conciliate the freethinkers and such as demanded a wider latitude of life than was permissible under the inherited creed. If this end was to be attained, it could be attained only in one way—by accommodation, accommodation in the Church's teaching and accommodation in its standard of Christian life. In the case of three representative Moderates we may note the different degrees of compromise which the body was prepared to make to attain its end. The three are Carlyle of Inveresk, 'Jupiter Carlyle,' who has already been named, Dr. Hugh Blair, and William Robertson, Principal of the University of Edinburgh. All these men, be it noted, were not only representative Moderates, but representative men of their age; and it is under this aspect that we are now concerned with them.

Carlyle has left an *Autobiography* which, as a picture of Scottish educated society of his time, is an invaluable historical document. If ever man was born to move with ease, grace, and acceptance in a thoroughly mundane society it was this minister of the parish of Inveresk. His magnificent personal appearance (Scott calls him the grandest demi-God he had ever seen), his courtly manners, and his splendid vitality made him a notable figure wherever he appeared. Scott says that he had not a spark of poetry in him,¹ but the statement must be taken with some qualification. When Wordsworth's poems first appeared, Carlyle read them with a keenness of appreciation which proves that even in old age he possessed a freshness of heart and mind which was denied to the brilliant Jeffrey, for whom the Wordsworthian manner was only imbecile affectation. Carlyle's chiefest joy in life was to mount his horse, and with some like-minded companions ride up to

¹ He 'was no more a poet than his precentor.'

London and taste the pleasures of that city, cultivating to the extent of his ability the society of persons distinguished by rank or fame. When he visited some hospitable house, his main interest was the quality of its mutton and claret, the goodness or badness of which he is always careful to record. This was the type of man whom the eighteenth century made the pastor of a rural congregation. He has himself told us how he was regarded by that congregation when the patron presented him. They considered him, he says, 'too full of levity and too much addicted to the company of his superiors.' David Hume once had the privilege of hearing him preach and after the sermon twitted him with treating his hearers to 'heathen morality' and to a *réchauffé* of Cicero's *Academics*.

Carlyle represented the extreme lengths to which Moderatism was prepared to go in accommodating Christianity to the times. Of a higher type as a Christian divine was Dr. Hugh Blair, the most famous preacher of his day in Scotland. Dr. Blair's fame was not limited to Scotland: in England his sermons were widely read; and, translated into several European languages, they were the admiration and envy of continental divines. It has long been the fashion to smile at the type of devotion which found edification in these sermons of Blair's. In literature, both secular and religious, we now demand something more intense than did the eighteenth century; quite recently Gray's *Elegy* was described as a flat and commonplace production. It is well to remember, however, that readers so unlike as Dr. Johnson, Jane Austen, Madame Necker, and George III., all found spiritual stimulus in Blair and spoke of him with gratitude and admiration. It must, therefore, be put to the credit of Moderatism that it produced a preacher who found acceptance with certain of the choicest spirits of his generation.

But the brightest ornament of the Moderates was not Blair but William Robertson, who for twenty years was their sagacious leader, and to whom more than to any other they

owed their victory over the popular party in the General Assembly and in the Church at large. In Robertson we see Moderatism at its best—its interest in secular studies, its respect for order and decorum, its type of religion in which emotion was subordinated to reason. In his youth Robertson chose as his motto, '*Vita sine literis mors est*,' and, as his voluminous Histories prove, he was faithful to it from the beginning to the end of his career. It is an admirable motto for a man of letters, but we may ask what would St. Paul have said of the preacher who took such a motto as his watch-word in his care of souls? Here we are far indeed from the *unum necessarium* which Christianity originally presented as its unconditional demand from all who would call themselves by its name.

The same temper of mind and the same intellectual conditions that brought forth Moderatism also gave birth to another product, more distinctively Scottish, and of wider and more enduring influence. It was the same second half of the eighteenth century that saw the appearance of what is specifically known as the 'Scottish Philosophy,' which till near the middle of the nineteenth was to be the dominant system of thought in Scotland, and was to find wide acceptance in France, and, though not to the same extent, even in Germany. All the intellectual products of any age necessarily partake of the same spirit and throw mutual light on each other. There is thus a kinship between Moderatism and the Scottish philosophy which is apparent on the surface. It was one who began his career as a Moderate minister, Dr. Thomas Reid, who was the father of that philosophy, and whose writings embody its teaching. He was himself an 'intruded' minister; and it is on record that on his first appearance in his parish of New Machar he was ducked in a horse-pond, and that when he preached his first sermon he had to be defended by a drawn sword. The scope and tendency of his philosophy were essentially identical with that of the religious party with which he

was associated. The aim of Moderatism was to commend religion by presenting it in such a guise that it would neither offend by its mysteries nor repel by its standard of conduct. Similarly the aim of the Scottish philosophy was to reconcile speculation with religion by an appeal to what it claimed to be the final test of universal experience. It was the boast of both to appeal to the common sense of mankind, and we have a singularly interesting testimony that, in the case of the philosophy, the boast was made good. In a characteristic and remarkable passage Goethe has summed up what gave the teaching of Reid its value in the eyes of thinking men.

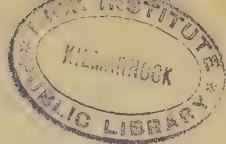
‘The reason,’ he says, ‘why foreigners—Britons, Americans, Frenchmen, and Italians—can gain no profit from our new (German) philosophy is simply that it does not directly lay hold on life. They can see no practical advantage to be derived from it; and so it is that men turn more or less to the teaching of the Scottish School as it is expounded by Reid and Dugald Stewart. This teaching is intelligible to the ordinary understanding, and this it is that wins it favour. It seeks to reconcile sensationalism and spiritualism, to effect the union of the ideal and the real, and thus to create a more satisfactory foundation for human thought and action. The fact that it undertakes this work and promises to accomplish it obtains for it disciples and votaries.’

From what has been said, the truth of a statement by the late Professor Masson must abundantly have appeared: the latter half of the eighteenth century, he said, was the period of ‘Scotland’s most energetic, peculiar, and most various life.’ It is certainly the period when, by the testimony of foreign observers, she made her largest contribution to the world alike in the sphere of speculative and practical ideas. Let me briefly summarise what that contribution was in the domains of science, of philosophy, and literature.

In science there are the names that have already been mentioned, those of Cullen, Hunter, Leslie, Black, Hutton;

and another illustrious name has to be added, that of James Watt. In their various departments, be it noted, all these men were pioneers: Cullen and Hunter in pathology, Black and Leslie in chemistry, Hutton in geology, and Watt in engineering. And in connection with science an interesting fact deserves to be noted: when the Newtonian system was still rejected in Oxford and Cambridge, it was taught by David Gregory in the University of Edinburgh—a remarkable testimony to the openness of mind which was indeed the characteristic of the best Scottish intellects of the time. In speculative thought we have seen that Scotland was the purveyor to Europe. The current of metaphysical philosophy received a new direction from the speculations of Hume, and the specifically Scottish philosophy reigned for more than half a century in the schools of Europe. In the new science of political economy Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* still remains the central work. In the domain of history proper, Hume and Robertson each produced composite wholes such as had not previously appeared in any modern literature, Hume's being perhaps the acutest intellect ever applied to the events of history, while Robertson's practical sagacity and width of survey have rarely been surpassed. In the literature of imagination there were at least two Scottish writers whose work had a potent influence on the literature of other countries. The literary historians of France and Germany both assign a direct and powerful influence to the author of the *Seasons* on the poetry of their respective countries. Thomson's work belongs to the first half of the century, but of far more resounding fame and quickening effect was the *Ossian* of James Macpherson, which appeared in 1762-3. Macpherson now stands in a somewhat dubious light; nevertheless, it is an indisputable fact that his *Ossian* struck a note which vibrated throughout Europe, and did more than any other intellectual product to draw the general gaze to the country which gave it birth. The works that have been named were all epoch-making in

their respective subjects ; but, as Voltaire's ironical words imply, there was a crowd of books written, which, though they did not attain to this distinction, yet exercised a wide influence in their day. What especially strikes us is the number of Scottish books of the period that were translated into the continental languages. The works of Lord Kames, the *Sermons* of Hugh Blair, Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, to mention only a few, all made the tour of Europe, significant evidence of the amount of truth that lay behind Voltaire's sarcasm. In view of her achievements in so many fields, therefore, it can hardly be gainsaid that the latter half of the eighteenth century was for Scotland 'the period of her most energetic, peculiar, and most various life.'



INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES OF SCOTLAND ON THE CONTINENT

IN the case of every nation we can trace certain large effects that were directly due to influences which came to it from without. In the development of our own country, we are reminded at every stage of her history of what she owed to the community of nations of which she has been a member. In the earliest period of her history that is known to us we find the missionaries of the Celtic Church of Ireland spreading light in certain portions of her territory. By the time she became a distinct kingdom she was open to all the influences that went to mould the different nations of Christendom, and to her contact with these nations she owed feudalism and the Catholic Church—the foundations of the medieval societies. Her Reformation of the sixteenth century was not self-originated, but was due to a European movement. So in the eighteenth century the prevailing type of religion, known as Moderatism, was born of the speculations of thinkers who were not her own sons.

It is a natural question to ask—Has Scotland, on her part, exercised any perceptible influence on the sister nations of the Christian group? Compared with these sister nations, she has certainly been at a disadvantage. By her geographical position and her limited natural resources she was debarred from playing such a permanently important part in the world as was assured to nations with greater material advantages. Only at certain periods of her history has she, owing to a conjunction of circumstances, been one of the determining factors in the rivalries of the powers of Europe. An inter-

esting chapter might be written on these periods when, owing to a special set of conditions, she possessed a political importance that made her action an anxious concern in the councils of every European Court. Our interest at present, however, is in less palpable forms of influence than those of politics and diplomacy ; it is with influences in the spheres of thought and feeling only that I propose to deal in what follows. What new currents of speculation, what new springs of emotion, has she communicated to other peoples which the world has agreed to recognise as directly proceeding from her ? As we shall see, there is one century in her history—the eighteenth—during which she was in remarkable degree a source of stimulus in almost all the intellectual interests of the time in Western Europe. To what extent she contributed to the common intellectual capital in the preceding centuries we have insufficient knowledge. It is on dubious grounds that she can claim certain writers of the Middle Ages whom we know to have been potent inspirers of their contemporaries, and, on the other hand, in the case of others whom she can claim with certainty, we have not the information requisite to estimate their influence. With such information as we possess, however, and with such detail as time permits, let us note the most remarkable Scots who, previous to the eighteenth century, may be regarded as seminal minds in their respective ages.

If we were to give credit to our early historians, as all Scotsmen once did, Scotland was betimes in the field. According to that remarkable annalist, Hector Boece, who did not invent the story, it was two Scots who assisted Charlemagne in founding the University of Paris. Unfortunately, as Charlemagne flourished in the ninth century, and the University of Paris was not founded till the twelfth, this early proof of Scotland's intellectual superiority we must perforce reject. How the story arose we can conjecture. The truth is that all through the Middle Ages, and even after them, Scotland figured under borrowed plumes. The illusion arose from a confusion of

the designation *Scotia*. The original *Scotia*—*vetus et major Scotia*—was not Scotland, but Ireland, and it was not till the eleventh century that the territory north of the Tweed came to be designated by that name. But long before that date Ireland had a great repute in the world for her learning. Whoever on the Continent knew Greek in the days of Charlemagne was either an Irishman or had been taught by an Irishman. It was the result of this confusion of terms that Scotland so long got credit for excellences which were not her own.

One scholastic theologian of distinction, who flourished as early as the twelfth century, we can claim with certainty as a Scot. It is our historian John Major who tells us what we know of him. This was Richard of St. Victor, a monk of the Augustinian Order, who apparently spent most of his life in the schools of Paris. Here is Major's quaint account of him¹: 'He was second to no one of the theologians of his generation; for both in that theology of the schools where distinction is gained as brother meets brother on the battlefield of letters, and in that other where each man lets down his solitary pitcher, he was illustrious,' and Major adds that he 'published a vast number of most meritorious lucubrations.' Also, according to Major, the name of Richard of St. Victor is associated with a dogma which has filled a large place in the history of the Catholic Church; in one of his sermons he was the first clearly to declare the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Richard died about the year 1173, and on his tomb in the cloister of St. Victor was inscribed a Latin epitaph from which we may infer that he died at a comparatively early age. The lines may be rendered as follows:

For virtue, genius, every art renowned,
Here, Richard, thou thy resting-place hast found.
Scotia the land that claims thy happy birth,
Thou sleepest in the lap of Gallic earth.

¹ The translation is that of Mr. Archibald Constable (Scot. Hist. Soc. vol. x.).

Though haughty Fate hath snapt thy short-spun thread,
 No scathe is thine ; thou livest still though dead.
 Memorials of thy ever-during fame,
 Thy works securely keep thy honoured name.
 With step too slow death seeks the halls of pride,
 With step too swift where pious hearts abide.

Of far more resounding fame than Richard of St. Victor was a Scot of the following generation—Michael Scot, called of Balwearie. It is only in comparatively recent years that Michael's real significance in his time has been recognised. In the traditions of his countrymen, as we know, he was the mightiest wizard Scotland had produced, and it is this conception of him that Sir Walter Scott has used with such effect in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. On the Continent, also, it was as an adept in the black arts that he attained notoriety, a notoriety blazoned for ever in Dante's great poem. As one who impiously professed to reveal the secrets of the future, Dante assigned him a place in the eighth circle of the *Inferno*, where the appropriate punishment of the sinners was to have their heads turned round so that they were compelled to walk backwards, 'for to look before them was denied.' In one of his grim pictures Dante brings the would-be diviner before us. 'That other,' his conductor Virgil tells the poet, 'that other so thin in the flanks was Michael Scot ; and of a truth he knew the play of magic arts.' His sinister renown as master in *diablerie* Michael shared with every thinker in the Middle Ages who attempted to extend the bounds of human knowledge. His contemporary, Roger Bacon, was in equally ill-repute as being in league with the infernal powers but, less fortunate than Michael, he paid a severe penalty in this world and not in an imaginary hell. Both were interested in what we now call physical science, and it is a sentence in Bacon's works that clearly marks the service that Michael did for his generation. Michael Scot, Bacon tells us, was the first to translate Aristotle's treatises concerning nature and mathema-

tics, with the result that Aristotle's fame was greatly magnified among the Latins. The significance of this sentence of Bacon is that it marks the dividing line between the earlier and the later scholasticism. Previous to these translations by Scot, the schoolmen knew only Aristotle's writings on logic, but with his new works in their hands their speculations made a new departure and found scope in wider interests and in more various problems. It will be seen, therefore, that Scot was an initiator, a pioneer who has his own place in the history of philosophic thought. So far as we know, he was the first of the legion of wandering Scots who in successive ages sought the fountains of learning wherever they were to be found, and who not infrequently gained the patronage of the great. We can trace dimly his steps in France, in Italy, and in Sicily, where he found favour with that brilliant imperial heretic, Frederick II. It was at Frederick's instance, it would appear, that he travelled as far as Toledo in Spain, and there it was that he made the acquaintance with the Arabic translations of Aristotle by Averrhöes, which he rendered into Latin, for he knew no Greek. And, besides his distinction as a revealer of Aristotle, he has another claim which has been fully recognised. Along with his translations he gave Averrhöes' Commentaries on Aristotle, and thus became one of the founders of Averrhöism, the rankest and most deadly heresy of the Middle Ages, inasmuch as it was the negation equally of benignant and of malign spiritual forces in nature.

In the thirteenth century flourished a still more distinguished thinker than Michael Scot—Duns Scotus, the 'Subtle Doctor,' who has also been claimed as a native of Scotland. As both England and Ireland contest the claim, however, and as the evidence in favour of none of the three claims can be considered satisfactory, we must perforce leave him out of account. We are in the same difficulty with regard to another famous writer of the thirteenth century—Johannes de Sacrobosco, the Latinised form of Holywood, Holybush, or Halifax.

Sacrobosco was the author of a work—a text-book on the Ptolemaic Astronomy—which had as wide a circulation and as lasting a repute as any production of the Middle Ages. Long after Copernicus had exploded the Ptolemaic system, it continued to be a text-book in the schools. George Buchanan versified it with poetic adornments in his poem on the Sphere, and as late as 1656 the Government of Holland ordered that it should have a place in the teaching of the youth of that country. But as England, Scotland and Ireland with equal probability claim Sacrobosco as their son, he also must be left out of our roll.

It is not till the close of the fifteenth century that we meet with the name of another Scot who can be said to have had a European reputation. In an interesting passage in his *Praise of Folly*, in which he specifies the characteristics of the different nations, Erasmus says of the Scots that they plume themselves on their skill in dialectic subtleties—a remark, it may be said in passing, which Galileo also made a century later. Erasmus's testimony to the metaphysical aptitudes of Scotsmen may have been suggested by one whom he must have personally known, as they were members of the same college—the Collège Montaigu, in the University of Paris. He was John Mair or Major, a native of Haddingtonshire, where he was born in 1470. He received the elements of his education in his own country, probably at the burgh school of Haddington, which John Knox also attended. His higher studies he pursued at the Universities of Cambridge and Paris, in the latter of which he became one of the most distinguished teachers. The subject in which he won his fame was that scholastic philosophy which had exercised the wits of the successive generations of thinkers throughout the Middle Ages. The ponderous folios he produced bear witness to an industry truly prodigious, and are at the same time a monument of the futility of so much of human effort. For it was the misfortune of Major that he came at a time when the scholastic philosophy, of which he

was the exponent, was moribund, and when a new world of ideas was being opened up, to which apparently his eyes were shut. He became, in fact, the jest and the butt of the men who looked to ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration and spiritual nutriment. Yet the distinction of those who selected him as an object for their wit is a tribute to his great reputation as a champion of the old order. The arch-mocker Rabelais had evidently heard of him, as in the wonderful library of St. Victor in Paris his Pantagruel found a book by John Major entitled *The Art of Making Puddings*. He was known to Melanchthon, also, so far off as Wittenberg. In a reply to the censure of the Sorbonne on the opinions of Luther, Melanchthon has these biting words on Major: 'I have seen John Major's Commentaries on Peter Lombard. He is now, I am told, the prince of the Paris divines. Good heavens! What waggonloads of trifling! What pages he fills with disputes whether there can be any horsemanship without a horse, whether the sea was salt when God made it. If he is a specimen of the Parisian, no wonder they have so little stomach for Luther.' Be it said that Melanchthon does not exaggerate the absurdity of the questions which Major raises in his Commentaries. He seriously discusses, for example, whether God could become an ox or an ass if he chose, and whether John the Baptist's head, when it was cut off, could be in more places than one. It would be a mistake, however, to conceive Major as a hidebound obscurantist. Apart from his logic and philosophy, he gave proof of an open and original mind. Both in his Commentaries and in his *History of Greater Britain* he expounds political theories which were eventually adopted at the Revolution of 1689. And he has a more remarkable claim to be regarded as an independent thinker; he threw out an idea which gives him a place in the history of Poor Law Reform. In his *Commentaries on Peter Lombard* he expresses this opinion, which in his day was regarded as of startling originality: 'If the prince or community should

decree that there should be no beggar in the country, and should provide for the impotent, the action would be praiseworthy and lawful.' And what is interesting is that the hint was taken by one state and city after another, and put into action as a remedy for mendicancy, the intolerable evil of the age. From this account of Major it will be seen that in his day he was a figure of European importance, and deserves to be regarded as one of the brightest ornaments of his country.

Major's contemporary, Hector Boethius or Boece, may be more briefly passed over. A native of Dundee, he also studied in Paris, became a professor of philosophy there, and was subsequently principal of the newly-founded University of Paris—an office which he filled with notable distinction. In philosophy he was a schoolman like Major; but, unlike Major, he was open to the new lights of the Revival of Learning. He was the friend and correspondent of Erasmus, the most brilliant adversary of the scholastic theology, and he wrote a Latin style which was evidently formed on classic models. Moreover, he did not, like Major, compose Commentaries on the Schoolmen, but confined himself to biography and history, and bequeathed two books to the world—his *Lives of the Bishops of Mortlach and Aberdeen* and his *History of the Scottish Nation*. It is only with his History that we are now concerned, as it had an influence of its own kind beyond the limits of Scotland. From a Scots translation of it by Archdeacon Bellenden the English annalist Holinshed appropriated certain passages for his *Chronicles of England*. And it was in Holinshed that Shakespeare found the nucleus for 'Macbeth' and the local colour with which the play abounds. But, further, it had the distinction of being translated by the royal cosmographer of France, and was thus the means of giving currency on the Continent to notions regarding Scotland which are hardly extinct till the present day. In his wonderful *History* Boece circumstantially relates the lives and fortunes of the successive kings of Scots whose

portraits adorn the walls of Holyrood, and his narrative materially helped to convey the impression, long prevalent on the Continent, that the Scottish monarchy was the oldest in Europe. Moreover, in his description of the physical characteristics of his native country he enumerates so many marvels that Scotland came to be regarded as having been a distinct creation.

At the opening of the sixteenth century were born three Scots who in different spheres did honour to their country abroad. They were Alexander Alane, better known as Alesius, Florence Wilson, and George Buchanan. Alesius, as his record proves, must have been one of the most strenuous Scots who ever left his native country. He was born in Edinburgh in 1500, and it is from his hand that we have the first prose description of his native city. When a boy he fell down the Castle rock, and his preservation was considered so marvellous that it was variously attributed to portions of Scripture he wore round his neck, to his guardian angel, and to the piety of his parents. In early manhood he adopted Protestant opinions, and was forced to flee to Germany, where at Wittenberg he gained the friendship of Melanchthon. Subsequently he came to England, where he was well received by Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, and lectured on Theology at Cambridge. Driven from England by the statute of the 'Six Articles,' he returned to Germany and played a notable part in forwarding the Reformation in that country. Florence Wilson was a man of another type. Mystic and humanist, he at Lyons became the centre of a circle of scholars who looked up to him as a rare exemplar of the graces and virtues that should adorn learning. Of Buchanan's fame on the Continent it is unnecessary to speak. For two centuries he was for continental scholars what Grotius called him, '*Scotiae illud numen.*' By the beauty of his Latin verse, and by the purity of his style in his *History of Scotland* he won for his country a place in the intellectual commonwealth of the nations.

As has already been said, the ideas that underlay the Scottish Reformation were not of home growth, but were mainly taken over from continental reformers. Directly, therefore, it had no intellectual influence on other countries. Indirectly, on the other hand, it affected the whole subsequent development of Christendom. Had Queen Mary on her return to Scotland in 1561 found the country still in the communion of the Church of Rome, momentous results must have ensued. We know how passionately she coveted the English crown; but, as things went, she did not even succeed in persuading Elizabeth to recognise her as her successor. Had Scotland been Catholic, however, Mary would in all probability have been in a position to make herself Queen of England by force of arms. At the period of her return the majority of the English people were still Roman Catholics. Backed by her own subjects, and supported by the Catholic party in England, she would have had a superiority of force against which Elizabeth could not have successfully contended. The result would have been that England would have been gained to Rome; and, with the loss of England, its great bulwark, Protestantism would have been at the mercy of the great Catholic powers of the Continent. Thus indirectly, it will be seen, the Scottish Reformation may have determined the spiritual and intellectual development of Western Europe during the last three centuries.

The object of the present essay is to note what original ideas, what fresh springs of emotion Scotland may fairly claim to have contributed to the general movement of mind in continental countries. Of the many distinguished scholars who issued from the Scottish Reformation we cannot say that any of them made such contributions. In the books that they wrote, in their teaching from the many professorial chairs which they filled on the Continent, so far as we know, they enunciated no thought, nor struck any new note that drew the world's attention. The most outstanding of them, Andrew Melville, signalised his teaching by his free handling

of Aristotle as he had been interpreted by the schoolmen, but in this he was no pioneer. From the Reformation till the eighteenth century there is but one Scot, Napier of Merchiston, whose name is written in the European firmament. By his discovery of logarithms Napier has a permanent place in the roll of original discoverers in mathematical science.

We come to the eighteenth century—the century in the national history when she made her largest contribution to the forwarding of human culture. These mocking words of Voltaire themselves attest the variety and importance of the ideas that then went forth from her. ‘It is an admirable result of the progress of the human spirit,’ Voltaire wrote, ‘that to-day rules of taste in all the arts, from the epic poem to gardening, come to us from Scotland. The human spirit daily expands, and we should not despair of soon receiving manuals of poetics and rhetoric from the Orkney Islands.’

We recognise as inadequate all attempts to explain the appearance of galaxies of genius at particular epochs in different countries. All that we can say in general of Scotland during the eighteenth century is that her people were then more alive both to material and intellectual interests than at any previous period of her history. During the two previous centuries the nation had been preoccupied with ecclesiastical and political questions which at once narrowed her outlook and absorbed her energies. In the eighteenth century she, like other countries, ceased to be dominated by theological questions, and turned her energies to making the most of this world. Thus was created an atmosphere in which her best minds could expatiate freely and raise questions that, in a previous age, would have sent their propounders to the stake. Be it said, also, that throughout the eighteenth century Scotland was in closer touch with the Continent than at any previous period. The most important European books were widely read, and it was the custom, we are told, for every Scottish gentleman with £300 a year to travel abroad for two or three

years before settling down to the duties of his position. Even in the Hebrides, as we are told in the account of his journey to these islands, Dr. Johnson 'never entered a house in which he did not find books in more languages than one.'

It was under these conditions that from Scotland there issued a series of works, in widely different spheres, which potently influenced European culture. In three distinct domains this influence may be traced—in the domain of abstract thought, in the domain of physical science, and in the domain of literature. In the brief space at my disposal I can do little more than indicate the most representative names, but even the bare mention of these names will recall what were the main intellectual interests of the eighteenth century.

The first name that meets us in the domain of abstract thought is that of Francis Hutcheson 'the never-to-be-forgotten Hutcheson,' as his pupil Adam Smith calls him. A Scoto-Irishman by birth, Hutcheson received his University education at Glasgow, where he subsequently held the post of Professor of Moral Philosophy for seventeen years. His tenure of that post marks an epoch in the intellectual development of Scotland. The testimony of succeeding Scottish thinkers to the awakening influence of Hutcheson's teaching is unanimous. He built up no philosophic system as they did, but by his gifts of exposition and of touching the higher instincts in man he created a new spiritual atmosphere for the world around him. The ideal that inspired all his teaching was that *reine Menschlichkeit*, which in the latter half of the century was the evangel proclaimed with fuller content by Herder and Goethe. On the Continent his influence was greater in Germany than in France, where the Newtonian philosophy, as expounded by Voltaire, held the field. To his influence in Germany, however, all German historians bear testimony. Probably without exception every German thinker in the latter half of the eighteenth century owed more or less to the inspiration of Hutcheson and to the ideas he set forth. In the

development of the German *Aufklärung* he was a potent force, and his doctrines in psychology and aesthetics were a permeating influence in German literature. But the conclusive tribute to the importance of Hutcheson is that he was a favourite author of Kant, who freely acknowledged his debt to him, by way both of stimulus and of suggestion.

The name of the next eminent Scottish thinker, that of David Hume, is writ large in the history of European thought. The issue of his teaching has been described as 'intellectual suicide,' a strange conclusion to have been reached in Scotland, which for nearly two centuries had been the peculiar home of dogmatic assertion on all ultimate questions. His influence in his own country was both deep and lasting. Largely owing to his teaching, the prevailing philosophic creed of Scottish thinkers during the latter half of the eighteenth century was a pagan naturalism, for which Christianity was an aberration of the human mind. In the House of Commons an honourable member ventured to assert that 'the Scots were not *all* freethinkers.' As late as 1817 John Gibson Lockhart could say that Hume's was regarded as the *beau idéal* of the Scottish mind; and still later (in 1832) Carlyle spoke of Hume as 'the pontiff of the world,' who ruled most hearts and guided most tongues, and whom Goethe had finally displaced from his sovereignty. On the Continent his influence was even greater than at home; for there, in the words of the most competent of witnesses, he became 'the chief factor in shaping European thought.' Like Hutcheson, he was a greater power in Germany than in France, where the *Encyclopédistes* had already evolved a philosophic system of their own. In France, it would appear that Hume was more generally appreciated as a historian than as a metaphysician. Writing from Paris in 1765, Horace Walpole says that Hume 'is here treated with perfect veneration. His history... is thought the standard of writing.' Be it added that in the following century Auguste Comte spoke of Hume as 'his principal precursor in philosophy.'

On Hume's influence in Germany it is unnecessary to enlarge. In the time-honoured phrase he 'woke Kant from his dogmatic slumber,' and with what consequences in the world of speculative thought the philosophical literature of every country is the speaking testimony.

To the third name in the succession—that of Adam Smith—it is sufficient merely to advert, as it is one of the landmarks in the history of human development. In three distinct spheres he exercised a potent influence on continental thought. His *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1759, affected the speculations of every German writer on ethics and aesthetics (Kant included) in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Of economic science, his *Wealth of Nations* constitutes him, if not the founder, at least the presiding divinity.

We come to the specific product of the Scottish genius in the reign of abstract thought—the 'Scottish School of Philosophy,' of which Thomas Reid was the father. Alike in France and in Germany the teaching of that school was welcomed by conservative spirits as supplying the most effective weapons against the common enemy—scepticism. During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century it was the officially recognised philosophy in the colleges of France. In his *Souvenirs d'Enfance* Renan tells us how he was reared on 'le bon Thomas Reid,' whose teaching he was assured, soothed and consoled and led to Christianity. But the most striking testimonies to the influence of the Scottish School come from two unexpected sources—one from a Frenchman, and the other from a German. Auguste Comte writes thus of his obligations to the whole succession of Scottish philosophic thinkers: 'It is to the Scottish School, and not like many others, to the German School, that I owe the first rectification of the grave aberrations, at once moral and intellectual, peculiar to what is called the French School. I shall never forget how my evolution was in the first instance especially due to some luminous inspirations of Hume and Adam Smith.'

The other testimony comes from a still more unexpected source—from Goethe, to whom all abstract thinking was distasteful, but whose all-embracing eye no manifestation of the human spirit escaped. ‘The reason,’ he says, ‘why foreigners—Britons, Americans, Frenchmen, and Italians—can gain no profit from our new [German] philosophy is simply that it does not directly lay hold on life. They can see practical advantages to be derived from it, and so it is that men turn more or less to the teaching of the Scottish School as it is expounded by Reid and Stewart. This teaching is intelligible to the ordinary understanding, and this it is that wins it favour. It seeks to reconcile sensationalism and spiritualism, to effect the union of the real and the ideal, and thus to create a more satisfactory foundation for human thought and action. The fact that it undertakes this work, and promises to accomplish it, obtains for it disciples and votaries.’

The second domain in which Scotland made its own contribution to the world’s progress—the domain of physical science—is beyond our present scope, and it may suffice merely to advert to the work of William Cullen in medicine; of John Hunter in anatomy; of Sir John Leslie in physics; of Hutton in geology; and of James Watt, ‘the chief of inventors,’ in practical discovery.

We come to the third domain—that of literature—in which Scotland exercised an influence on the Continent. In recent years French and German scholars have given their attention to the subject, and with some unexpected results. In the sphere of imaginative literature, it appears, Scotland has made a double contribution: it supplied new themes, new motives, and new inspiration, and it gave to the world certain novel theories regarding the nature of genius and the conditions under which it works.

Only two Scots can be named who, as poets, attracted the attention of Europe in the eighteenth century. The one was James Thomson, the author of *The Seasons*, the other, James

Macpherson, the 'translator' of *Ossian*. To Thomson's *Seasons* Germans and French historians of their respective literatures ascribe the awakening of a new interest in nature which permanently affected the development of poetry in both countries. According to a French author, who has written a large book on the subject, Thomson not only inspired Rousseau in his attitude to nature, but in his poem on *Liberty* supplied him with his 'moral ideas' and his 'sociological doctrine.' In Italy Thomson appears to have been widely known. At least, some thirty years after the publication of *The Seasons* an Italian historian of literature could write that the work was 'universally read with infinite pleasure by all lovers of good poetry.' On Macpherson's *Ossian*, now a disenchanted thing, it is unnecessary to dwell. It struck the most resounding note in European literature of the eighteenth century, and it laid its spell on the greatest man of action and the greatest man of thought among their contemporaries—on Napoleon and on Goethe.

Recent German research has opened up a new chapter relative to the intellectual influence of Scotland on the Continent in the eighteenth century. From the seventies of that century a grand problem which occupied German thinkers was the nature of genius, especially as it manifests itself in creative literature. In the consideration of this problem, we are now told, German writers owe a large debt to two Scotsmen who are all but forgotten even in their own country. The one was Henry Home, Lord Kames, whose work entitled *Elements of Criticism* attracted the attention both of French and of German critics. It was, indeed, a passing remark in that work to the effect that the *Henriade* was not a satisfactory epic poem that provoked Voltaire's sarcasm already quoted. In Germany, however, Home's influence was greater than in France. Every important German writer on aesthetics, Kant included, derived inspiration and suggestion from his speculations on that subject.

The other Scottish writer, even less known than Home to his countrymen of to-day, exercised a still greater influence on German thought. He was Alexander Gerard, a professor in the University of Aberdeen, and the two books that brought him his fame were his *Essay on Taste* and his *Essay on Genius*. The *Essay on Genius* a recent German writer has described as 'an epoch-making performance' on its subject, and he supports his statement by tracing the obligations of Kant to Gerard in his conceptions of the nature of genius and taste. And Kant himself freely acknowledged the obligation. 'Gerard,' he said, 'is the best writer on the subject.'

In another field of literature which has a closer interest for us in the present connexion—the field of history—there were three Scots whose works made the tour of the Continent and exercised an influence of their own. The names of two of them—Hume and Robertson—are known to every student of history; the name of the third—Adam Ferguson—is less familiar, yet of the three he was the most fruitful in suggestion to continental writers. As we know, Robertson and Hume owed their inspiration to the example of Voltaire, but what gave them their distinction was a unity of treatment and a logical arrangement of their materials of which there was no previous example. Their histories were regarded as models of lucid narration and philosophical reflection, and, translated into various continental languages, were read with equal admiration by the general reader and by the professional historian. Writing after the middle of the eighteenth century the Italian literary historian already quoted exclaims: 'who does not read and admire Hume's History,' and of Robertson he says that he has won 'immortal praise.'

The influence of Ferguson was of another kind, and was mainly confined to Germany. His *History of the Roman Republic* long held its place as a standard book, but it was in his speculative works, his *Essay on Civil Society* and his *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, that he threw out the

suggestions which influenced German conceptions of the scope and meaning of universal history. To Ferguson pre-eminently among various English and Scottish writers has been traced the beginning of a new method of historical research which appeared in Germany in the latter half of the eighteenth century. 'Generally speaking,' says the German writer whom I am following, 'the German conception of *Weltgeschichte* was prompted by English authors,' and among these authors he assigns a special place to Ferguson.

With the eighteenth century closes the continuous succession of Scotsmen who in such different spheres made their respective contributions to European culture. In the nineteenth there was but one, Sir Walter Scott, who by his original genius appealed to the civilised world and influenced the imaginative literature of every country. For the Scottish nation, therefore, this eighteenth century has a unique interest. May it be added that for Europe at large it has an interest of its own, if merely as a curious chapter in the history of the human spirit?

A FORGOTTEN SCHOLAR OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

IN Smollett's comedy, *The Reprisal*, published in 1757, one of the characters, a Scottish ensign in the French service, makes this remark to his companion-in-arms, an Irish lieutenant of the name of Ochlabber, 'Hoot, fie! Captain Ochlabber, whare's a' your philosophy? Did ye never read Seneca *De Consolatione*, or Volusenus, my countryman, *De Tranquillitate Animi*?' It was not very likely that an Irish lieutenant should have heard of Volusenus, and still less likely that he had read his principal work. At least, only six years before the appearance of Smollett's play, a Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Dr. William Wishart, had published a new edition of Volusenus's book, accompanied by a prefatory epistle in which the writer ¹ asks this question, 'How many to-day have heard anything of Volusenus?' If we go back a century earlier, we find that Volusenus was then no better known, even in his native country. In 1637 had appeared a previous issue of his book, and the editor, David Echlin, physician to Henrietta Maria, begins his dedication as follows: 'How much not only his parent Scotland, prolific in such geniuses, but all the nations of the earth, owe to Florentius Volusenus, this one little book of his amply testifies.' In view of the immense debt the world owed to Volusenus, however, it is somewhat curious to find the editor taking credit to himself for 'rescuing Volusenus from the jaws of Orcus.' These testimonies may suffice to prove that, though Volusenus

¹ Dr. John Ward of Gresham College, London.

may have been known to a few scholars, he had no place in the memories of the mass of his countrymen as one of the distinguished ornaments of their nation. Be it added that of the Scottish historians who wrote in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only one, Calderwood, mentions his name.¹

In recent years, Florence Wilson, for such is his name in the vernacular, has attracted the attention of three distinguished scholars, all of whom recognised in him a rare and choice spirit whom his countrymen do not well to forget. It fell to Professor Robertson Smith to write an account of Wilson for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and he became so interested in the task that he made a special investigation of Wilson's career, with the result that he discovered two productions from his hand which had hitherto escaped notice. The late Dr. R. C. Christie, whose life was devoted to the study of the sixteenth century, and whose biography of the printer Étienne Dolet is the monument of his labours, also found in Wilson a subject of such interest that he contributed a sketch of him to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in which he throws new light on certain periods of Wilson's career. Finally, a French historian, M. Ferdinand Buisson, well known for his services to primary education in France, has given a picture of Wilson and his surroundings which puts it beyond doubt that he was one of whom his country had reason to be proud.²

In the sixteenth century it was not the custom to produce

¹ Calderwood's account of Wilson is as follows: 'Florence Wilsone, a Black frier, in Elgine of Murrey, threw off his monkish habite this yeere, (1539.) and fled out of the countrie. He was a learned man, and of great expectatioun, as Gesnerus gathered, partlie frome his workes, and partlie by conference with him at Lions. The yeere following, as he maketh mentioun in his Bibliothecke, when he was in England, he had some conference with the Bishop of Rochester. The bishop tooke him to have beene a merchaunt. But after some conference he perceaved him to be a learned man, and burst forth in these words, "I mervell that the hereticks can interprete the Scriptures so perfytelie!"' (*Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*, pp. 133-4.)

² Sébastien Castellion, *sa Vie et son Œuvre* (Paris, 1892), vol. i. pp. 35-36.

elaborate biographies. At the close of his long life, George Buchanan wrote a brief sketch of his own career; and it was a wise precaution, since that sketch is the foundation of every biography that can be written of him. In the case of even the most notable scholars, a page or two prefixed to their works by someone more or less intimately acquainted with them is for the most part the sole record we have of their lives. So it is in the case of Florence Wilson, of whom we have a page of biography from the hand of one who wrote some seventy years after his death.¹ Fortunately there are other stray sources of information which give us glimpses of him at certain periods of his life that are of special interest and significance. Anything approaching a detailed biography of him, indeed, is impossible with the materials at our disposal, yet, such as it is, our information presents us with a career and a personality which seems to have impressed and fascinated personages of the highest note, equally in the world of learning and in that of diplomacy.

Of Wilson's parentage we know nothing—his biographer making the bare statement that he was of good family. Nor have we any trustworthy record either of the date or of the place of his birth.² As to the date, all that we can safely say is that he was born in the opening years of the sixteenth century, and thus was the contemporary of George Buchanan, who was born in 1506 or 1507, and with whom in later life he came to be in friendly relations. From a passage in his chief work we incidentally learn the part of the country with which at least a part of his youth was associated. He there represents himself as walking on the banks of the river Lossie in company with one John Ogilvie, who was to be his life-long friend,

¹ The biographer of Thomas Wilson, advocate, son-in-law of Archbishop Adamson. The biography is attached to his edition of Adamson's Works (*Adamsoni Poemata Sacra*, Lond. 1619, 4to).

² His biographer gives no date, but specifies the place of his birth as 'the banks of the Lossie, not far from Elgin.' This statement was probably based on a passage in *De Animi Tranquillitate* referred to below.

and discussing the eternal problems of human life and destiny.¹ As at the period when these discussions took place he had studied philosophy for four years, we may infer that he had completed his course at some university where philosophy was taught.

In the sixteenth century, in Scotland, households did not frequently migrate from one part of the country to another. Under the conditions of feudal society the successive generations remained of necessity attached to the neighbourhood where they had originally struck root. It seems a fairly safe inference, therefore, that on the completion of his university course Wilson returned to his native district and his paternal home. And if the inference be correct, he was fortunate in the region of his birth. The Scottish historians, who wrote in the sixteenth century, celebrate the district of Moray as the garden of Scotland, unsurpassed elsewhere for the fertility of its soil and the beauty of its scenery. In Wilson's day natural scenery was not the object of aesthetic contemplation which it is in ours, but in a simple, human way the men of that time found their own pleasure in it, as their writings abundantly testify. Long afterwards, when settled in France, Wilson recalled the beauties of his early haunts—the hills clothed with woods, the fertile fields and the neighbouring lake, Loch Spynie, frequented by swans.²

More important, in view of his subsequent career, is the fact that in the neighbouring town of Elgin he would find advantages which few other towns in Scotland could then offer. There was its cathedral, the most beautiful edifice of its kind in the country, though in Wilson's day it bore the marks of the sacrilegious hand of the Wolf of Badenoch, who in the previous century had avenged himself on the Bishop of Moray by ravishing his temple. In the cathedral and the community of ecclesiastics attached to it he would see the Church of Rome represented in its most august form,

¹ *De Animi Tranquillitate* (ed. 1751), p. 100.

² *Ib.* p. 101.

and the impression they made upon him appears in his description of the Temple of Peace, constructed of Parian marble, and the home of heathen virtue.¹ In Elgin, also, towards the end of the previous century, 1489, the Chapter of the cathedral had founded a school which from the richness of the diocese of Moray was likely to have been one of the best in the country. As in all the cathedral schools of the time, Latin would be the main subject of study, and, if it were taught as it was taught in other schools of which we have the record, the aptest pupils would acquire a colloquial use of the Latin language which made them citizens of educated Europe. The Latin taught at Elgin in Wilson's day would, of course, be the medieval Latin of the Church, and not that language as it had come to be written by the Latin humanists of the fifteenth century. In an interesting passage in his *Dialogue* Wilson expresses the consciousness of his disadvantage in not having been trained in the latest lights of the revival of letters. To the two interlocutors who desire him to expound his philosophy of life he apologises for himself as 'a barbarian, born and reared in an alien tongue and alien manners—that is to say, among the remote Britons; and late and superficially tinctured with that learning which for them is foreign and acquired.'² In point of fact, wherever he acquired the accomplishment, Wilson came to write Latin with a correctness which gained the applause of contemporary scholars; and he even criticises Erasmus for the negligence of his Latin style.³ And we shall see that at a turning-point of his career the choiceness and elegance of his Latin speech gained him the friendship and patronage of one of the great princes of the Church, accomplished in all the learning of the age.

Indirectly from Wilson himself we learn that he studied at the University of Aberdeen, then the best equipped of the three universities that had been founded in Scotland during

¹ *Ib.* pp. 101 et seq.

² *Ib.* p. 19.

³ *De Animi Tranquillitate* (ed. 1751), p. 250.

the fifteenth century. Under the munificent patronage of Bishop Elphinstone, its founder, it had a staff of thirty-six teachers—all, be it noted, members of the Collegiate Church of Aberdeen. At its head was a scholar of dubious fame in our literary annals, Hector Boyce,¹ who deserves a passing reference as the earliest known representative in Scotland of what is designated humanism. Born in Dundee about 1465, he had studied in Paris, where he subsequently taught philosophy in one of its most famous 'schools, the Collège Montaigu. Of all the colleges in the University of Paris, Montaigu had the reputation of being most hostile to the new lights of the time, and Erasmus bitterly rails against it as the stronghold of effete studies. The philosophy which Boyce taught in Montaigu, therefore, must have been the trifling dialectic into which scholasticism had degenerated at the close of the fifteenth century. But what is singular is that he writes a Latin style which in vocabulary and construction has nothing in common with the Latin of the schoolmen, as we have it, for example, in the writings of his contemporary, John Major. Boyce had evidently taken as his models the classical writers of Rome, more especially Livy, whom in his *History of Scotland* he obviously sought to emulate. Of that remarkable history this is not the place to speak. Here we are only concerned with the fact that Boyce belonged to a class of persons who are found in every age. By his natural instincts he was in full sympathy with the new tendencies of his time, but from early training and associations he could not entirely free himself from the trammels of the past.

As philosophy was the subject on which Boyce prelected, it is probable that it was at his feet that Wilson sat during his university course at Aberdeen. Doubtless the matter and method of Boyce's discourses were but a repetition of what

¹ In a letter addressed later in life to his friend John Ogilvie, Wilson sends his greetings to Hector Boyce, whom, therefore, he must have known in his youth. (*Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, viii. Sept. 10, 1859.)

he had learned in the benighted college of Montaigne. At all events, Wilson does not appear to have thought his four years' study of philosophy at Aberdeen to have been very profitably spent. 'The early part of my life,' he says, 'was passed in learning trifles; would that a good portion of it had been devoted to learning the Greek and Latin tongues. From that neglect I find myself deficient in those advantages which are requisite to one who wishes to succeed in literature.'¹ Here speaks the scholar, for whom the study of classical antiquity was the most desirable discipline for the human spirit. By an interesting coincidence, about the very period when Wilson was listening to Boyce, George Buchanan was studying at St. Andrews under John Major, the schoolman pure and simple. And Buchanan was as irreverent towards his master as was Wilson. 'John Major,' he says, 'wasted our time in dialectic subtleties and sophistical arguments.' It was the meeting of the old world and the new. Wilson and Buchanan were both children of the Renaissance, though each pursued a path of his own. The predilection of Wilson was reflective meditation on the problems of life, while the interests of Buchanan were in literature, and especially in poetry, in which he was to win such a resounding reputation among his contemporaries.

On his completing his university course at Aberdeen, as we saw, Wilson appears to have settled for a time at or near Elgin. When next we hear of him he is in Paris, there, like so many of his contemporaries, completing the studies he had begun in his native country. There was a special inducement for students of the diocese of Moray to proceed to the University of Paris. So far back as 1325 a Bishop of Moray had founded a college there for the instruction and accommodation of youths of his diocese who might choose a career of learning. In time the college had been opened to Scots from all parts of the country, but natives of Moray would have a preferable

¹ *De Animi Tranquillitate*, p. 250.

claim, and it is natural to suppose that, on his first settlement in Paris, Wilson would be a bursar (exhibitioner) of that college.

At this point begins the period of Wilson's career of which we have any direct knowledge, and which brings him before us as one whose gifts and graces gained him the confidence of the greatest persons in Church and State. At some date before 1528 we find that he has made the acquaintance of no less a personage than Cardinal Wolsey, to whose son, euphemistically designated his nephew, he is acting as tutor during his residence in Paris. From the earliest of the few letters we have from Wilson's hand we learn that in the autumn of 1528 he was residing with Wolsey at Richmond, and we may assume that previous to that date there had been more or less intercourse between them.¹ Through his association with Wolsey, Wilson would have the opportunity of knowing the leading men of the time in England, and we have it from himself that he was on familiar terms with Bishops Fisher and Gardiner, and with Dr. Fox, afterwards Bishop of Hereford,² all of whom were to play their own parts in the momentous events of the next quarter of a century. A kindred spirit to Wilson would have been Sir Thomas More, but More's name does not occur in the list of eminent Englishmen with whom he was associated. Though an acceptable guest at the tables of the great, he steadfastly maintained his independence of mind. On one occasion,³ he tells us, he found that in his intercourse with a certain exalted personage he was expected to pay court to him in a fashion that compromised his self-respect, whereupon he cut the connection, though this implied the temporary sacrifice of his own fortunes. According to John Major, 'fier comme un Escossois' was a byword in France

¹ *State Papers of Henry VIII.*, 1st October, 1528.

² He mentions his intimacy with these persons in *De Animi Tranquillitate*.

³ *De Animi Tranquillitate*, p. 235.

in his day, and it would seem that Wilson had his share of the national characteristic.

In 1528, when Wilson was his housemate, the fate of Wolsey was trembling in the balance. In the course of the negotiations connected with the divorce of Catherine of Arragon he had incurred the suspicions of his imperious master Henry; in 1529 came his tragic fall; and in November of the following year he died a broken man. The ruin of Wolsey involved a change in the fortunes of Wilson, but he was lucky enough to find a new patron, with whom he was to be associated for the next six or seven years. This new patron was Thomas Cromwell, formerly Wolsey's secretary, who now took Wolsey's place in the councils of Henry. It is in a new capacity, however, that we now find our wandering Scot. From an entry in the State Papers of Henry VIII. under the date of 24th May, 1530, we learn that he is again in Paris, and that Dr. Fox had been commissioned to pay him the sum of £6 13s. 4d. The money had been sent by Cromwell, for whom Wilson was now performing certain services in Paris. What these services were appears from letters addressed by Wilson to Cromwell that have been preserved. The first letter,¹ dated 25th April, 1531, is written in English, and is the only specimen preserved of Wilson's composition in the vernacular. The letter has in parts been destroyed by fire, but enough of it has been preserved to show its general purport. The information it conveys is mainly concerned with cases of heretical preaching in France, a subject in which Cromwell would be naturally interested as bearing on his own policy towards the Church. What is more to our purpose, however, are the personal references which the letter contains. We learn from it that Wilson has a benefice in Kent, probably the gift of Cromwell, and that in his absence his duties are performed by a procurator, for whom he prays Cromwell's good offices. He

¹ This letter, and another addressed to Dr. Starkey, appear in vol. i. of the *Bannatyne Miscellany*.

had been commissioned to purchase books for Cromwell in Paris, but his purse is empty (its usual condition, he says), though he is assured by Maister Hampton that he would not lack money for anything that concerned Cromwell's interests. In the course of fifteen or sixteen days he was returning to England, when he would report the rest of his news.

What is noteworthy in this letter is the familiar tone with which the writer addresses the great minister, now the chief adviser of the King of England.¹ Evidently there had been much previous intercourse between them, and Cromwell, who was noted for his discernment of men, had seen that Wilson possessed the qualities of a useful agent. We see, therefore, the new capacity in which Wilson now found himself. He was one of those many emissaries for whom Cromwell found employment in keeping him informed of all the movements on the Continent which might have a bearing on his own policy in the conduct of English affairs.

Other letters of Wilson's belonging to the same period further illustrate the nature of the business which he transacted for Cromwell in Paris. The 'Maister Hampton' just mentioned informs Cromwell that Wilson has spent ten or twelve crowns in buying books for him—a sum he was little able to spare, and which he (Hampton) had made good to him. Wilson was coming to England to look after his benefice in Kent, which is in danger of being taken from him.

A second letter of Wilson's to Cromwell proves that he was in complete sympathy with Cromwell's ecclesiastical policy. It is dated 19th September, 1535, by which date, it will be remembered, Henry VIII. had definitely broken with the Church of Rome, and Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More had been sent to the scaffold for refusing to acknowledge Henry as Head of the Church in England. The letter further

¹ In a subsequent letter Wilson apologises for the familiarity of his address.

shows that Wilson was known as Cromwell's accredited agent in Paris. The bearer of communications addressed to Henry from Rome had requested Wilson to supply him with credentials to Cromwell, who might secure his access to Henry. And Wilson had his own information to convey to Cromwell regarding the attitude of France towards English policy. A certain Captain Jean Borthwick (evidently a Scotsman in the service of France), who had lately come from England, had made a most favourable report of the state of that country in the presence of the King of France and his leading councillors, and urged them to stand by Henry in his quarrel with Rome. But the most interesting statement in the letter, so far as Wilson is concerned, is in its concluding sentence. 'I leave this day for Italy,' he writes, 'to see if I can gain my living in some university there.'¹ So it would appear that his connection with Cromwell had not put money in his purse.

At this period begins the part of Wilson's life which is of essential interest—the period when he comes before us as a typical scholar of the Renaissance. While resident in Paris he had had other illustrious patrons besides Cromwell, doubtless commended to them by his connection with the English Government as well as by his own personal qualities. One was the Cardinal of Lorraine, brother of Mary of Lorraine, second wife of James V. The great family of Guise, to which the cardinal belonged, had not at this time attained the ascendancy which at a later date made it supreme in the councils of France, but the high rank and ambition of its different members already gave it a foremost place in the kingdom. The cardinal himself was one of those magnificent ecclesiastics who followed the fashion set by the churchmen of Italy of posing as a patron of learning and learned men, and on Wilson he conferred an annual pension, so intermittently paid, however, that Wilson apparently found it necessary

¹ *State Papers of Henry VIII.*, 19th Sept. 1535.

to find a more satisfactory patron.¹ The scholars of the period, it is to be remembered, saw no indignity in these relations ; in their own estimation they conferred honour on the rich and great who gave them of their superfluity. Such was the idea of men like Erasmus and our own Buchanan when they appealed for pecuniary assistance to enable them to live and pursue their special studies.

Wilson's new patron was Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, and one of the leading French diplomatists of the time. As du Bellay had been ambassador in England during the years following 1527, he had probably made Wilson's acquaintance in the circle of Wolsey and Cromwell.² When Wilson informed Cromwell that he was on the point of starting for Italy, he did not add that it was in the suite of the bishop he would accomplish the journey. Such was the case, however, and the fact need not surprise us, as it was then the custom of the great to have a scholar in their train who might entertain them with his learned conversation.³ Buchanan, for example, accompanied the Maréchal de Brissac in his military campaigns, and was an honoured guest at his table.

We know that Wilson visited Italy at some period of his life, but it was not at this time. While on the road to Rome, he fell ill at Avignon and found himself in circumstances which throw a curious light on the bishop's liberality. He was not only ill, but so destitute of means that he could not even procure the common necessities of life. On his recovery he recalled a conversation he had had in the previous summer with a friend in London, who had recommended the town of Carpentras as a congenial place for quiet study.⁴ But there was an additional inducement that drew him to Carpentras.

¹ The Cardinal of Lorraine may have been the exalted personage who exacted a subservience which Wilson resented.

² Du Bellay was a patron of Rabelais among others.

³ As we have seen, Wilson's intention was to seek some scholastic appointment in Italy. He had, therefore, no special post in du Bellay's train.

⁴ *State Papers of Henry VIII.*, Wilson to Dr. Starkey, 21st Nov. 1535.

An important school had lately been established there, and it had come to Wilson's knowledge that the managers were looking out for a master to take charge of one of its departments. As it happened, the person who would have the chief influence in the appointment was one whose reputation as a scholar and as a patron of scholars was known to all the learned world. This was Jacopo Sadoletto, Bishop of Carpentras,¹ who on account of the elegance of his Latin style had held the post of Apostolical Secretary to two successive popes. In Sadoletto were combined a genuine piety and a cultivated taste rarely found among the high ecclesiastics of the time. He was one of a small group of eminent churchmen who aimed at a reconciliation between Protestantism and Catholicism on the basis of a liberal religion, which would preserve the unity of Christendom and thus avert the disasters which must follow a divided authority in the Church. But our chief interest in Sadoletto in the present connection is that from his hand we have the only characterisation of Wilson which enables us to realise what manner of man he was.

On a day in November, 1535, Wilson, with recovered health, walked from Avignon to Carpentras, a distance of some twenty miles, and reached Sadoletto's episcopal palace at nightfall. In a letter of Sadoletto we have an account of the interview that followed, and the letter, be it said, is one of the most generally interesting documents of the time that has come down to us. It is a representative specimen of the epistolary style in which the humanists of the period sought to emulate Cicero and Pliny, and it breathes the very spirit of that zeal for classical antiquity which created a bond of union between the scholars of all countries. Moreover, as has been said, it presents us with a portrait of Wilson which explains what it was in him that attracted so many different types of men. The letter was written four days after the arrival of Wilson

¹ Sadoletto was made a cardinal in the following year, 1536.

at Carpentras, and is addressed to a cousin of Sadoleto's who had been commissioned to secure a suitable person for the vacant mastership. The letter is too long to be quoted in full, but even an abridgment of it will convey its general character.

Four days ago, Sadoleto writes, he had sat down for an evening's study, when his chamberlain announced that a stranger, by his gown evidently a scholar, desired to see him. He was annoyed at being disturbed, but he ordered the visitor to be admitted. The cardinal is at once arrested by the stranger's address, and by the refinement and choiceness of his Latinity. Questions then follow. Whence did he come, where had he been educated, what was his past history? To his surprise Sadoleto learns that the stranger comes from Scotland, 'that remotest part of the earth.' His name, he learns, is Volusenus, and he had come from Avignon to Carpentras partly to make the acquaintance of Sadoleto, and partly to offer himself as a candidate for the vacant post in the school at Carpentras. Meanwhile Sadoleto is every moment becoming more and more charmed with the modesty and evident accomplishments of his visitor, and is delighted at the prospect of having such a man in his neighbourhood. On the following day he invites the magistrates of the town to meet the stranger at dinner, when Wilson displays such gifts and graces that the magistrates there and then offer him the vacant post in their school.¹

Though introduced to his new position under such happy auspices, Wilson apparently did not find it altogether to his mind. His annual salary was a hundred gold crowns²—a sum which Sadoleto must have thought inadequate, as in the following year he besought the Cardinal of Lorraine to renew his former pension to Wilson on the ground that

¹ *Sadoleti Epistolarum libri sexdecim* (Lugduni, 1554), p. 657.

² In the letter just quoted Sadoleto states the salary as 100 gold crowns; Wilson in his letter to Starkey says the sum was 70 crowns.

he was as assiduous in his studies in Carpentras as he had been in Paris.¹ Moreover, the subjects Wilson had to teach—Latin grammar and the rudiments of Greek—were uncongenial to him, as his own predilection was for the study of philosophy.²

How long Wilson retained his post at Carpentras no authority informs us,³ but what further notices we have of him associate his last years not with Carpentras but with the neighbouring city of Lyons. Lyons was at this time the intellectual capital of France; from its printing-presses issued the most important publications of the day; and scholars from all countries found within its walls a society which was hardly to be found elsewhere. Wilson must either have permanently resided in Lyons or have paid it long and frequent visits, as he was an esteemed intimate of the most distinguished men who resided there.⁴ Two references to him, which belong to this period, deserve to be quoted as showing the quality of his mind and the range of his accomplishments. One is from Conrad Gesner, whose encyclopædic knowledge gave him pre-eminence even in that age of prodigious acquirements. Gesner, who met Wilson in Lyons in 1540, describes him as being then still only a youth, and adds that from his erudition great things were expected to the benefit of all the learned.⁵ More specific as to Wilson's accomplishments is the reference of another scholar, who depicts him as having, in addition to his virtues and pleasant manners, not only a knowledge of the arts and sciences, but also an acquaintance with six languages—among them being French, Italian, and Spanish—which he had acquired in the

¹ *Sadoleti Epistolae*, p. 228.

² Wilson to Starkey, 21st Nov. 1535.

³ His death at Vienne on his journey home may imply that he had started from Carpentras, where he may have been residing.

⁴ See Buisson, *op. cit.* i. pp. 35-36.

⁵ *Gesneri Bibliotheca Universalis* (Tiguri, 1545), f. 245-6.

countries where they were spoken.¹ From these references and from other sources it is apparent that among the distinguished men in Lyons Wilson was one of the most distinguished, and that his society was sought as an honour and a privilege.

The year 1546 is recorded as the date of his death. In that year he set out for his native land, which, so far as we know, he had only once visited since he had first left it. Scotland at this time was not an inviting place for men of Wilson's tastes and ways of thinking. In 1546 George Wishart was burned and Cardinal Beaton murdered, and, as affairs went in Church and State, Wilson, who, as we shall see, was neither a sound Protestant nor a sound Catholic, might find himself between two fires. Before starting on his homeward journey, therefore, he consulted Sadoletto as to the course he should follow in a land so distracted by civil and religious strife. Sadoletto's advice was characteristic; the existing religious dissensions in the religious world, he wrote, were such as to try men's faith, but he recommended Wilson, as far as in him lay, to abide by the religion of his fathers and dedicate to its service the gifts which had been bestowed upon him.²

But Wilson was not destined to see his native land. On his journey home he died at Vienne on the Rhone, under what circumstances no record tells us. His death was lamented by one who, like himself, represented Scotland in the European society of letters. At some period which we cannot definitely fix, Wilson had met George Buchanan, probably in Paris, and, though their respective careers did not again bring them together, each continued to retain for the other an esteem, of which, as it happens, two memorials remain. In the library of the University of Edinburgh is preserved a Hebrew dictionary with this inscription: *Georgius*

¹ *Les emblèmes de Seigneur André Alciat, de nouveau translatz en François, vers pour vers, juxte la diction Latine*, etc. (Lyons, 1549).

² *Sadoleti Epistolae*, p. 639.

Buchananus: *Ex munificentia Florentii Voluseni*; and from the pen of Buchanan we have an epitaph on Wilson, the poignant brevity of which is the best evidence that it came from the heart.

Hic musis, Volusene, jaces, carissime, ripam
Ad Rhodani, terra quam procul a patria!
Hoc meruit virtus tua, tellus quae foret altrix
Virtutum, ut cineres conderet illa tuos.

The work which preserved Wilson's name among the learned for at least two centuries after his death was his *De Animi Tranquillitate*.¹ That it had a considerable circulation during that period is proved by the fact that it passed through four editions, the first of which appeared in 1543 and the last in 1751. The special charm it had for certain minds can easily be understood. It is written in a Latin style which, though interspersed with unclassical words and phrases, is fluent and easy, and it abounds with literary allusions which appeal to the scholar. But its chief attractiveness is in its fine vein of meditation, suggestive at once of a wide humanity, of refinement, and moral elevation, which we know to have been Wilson's characteristics. The book is written in the form of a dialogue—obviously in imitation of the philosophical dialogues of Cicero. There are three interlocutors, Wilson himself and two friends, who are represented as looking to him as their master, from whom they expect to hear words of wisdom. The scene of the conversation is a garden on the slope of a hill overlooking the town of Lyons and the surrounding country. The main intention of the book, a good-sized octavo, is to show the superiority of the Christian religion, compared with pagan philosophy, in furthering man to his highest good. At the period when the book was written, be it noted, this

¹ It may be worth noting that a copy of *De Animi Tranquillitate*, which had belonged to Dr. Samuel Parr, was presented to the Elgin Literary and Scientific Association by Dr. Taylor in 1861. I. Taylor, *A Memoir of Florentius Volusenus*. Elgin, 1861.

was not merely an academic thesis : it was an address to the times. In Italy especially, admiration for the Greek and Roman classics had gone so far that the Church itself seemed on the way to be paganised. Cardinal Bembo, one of the devotees of the ancients, warned Sadoletto against reading St. Paul's Epistles for the reason that they would corrupt his Latin style, and Erasmus expressed his fear lest Jupiter should one day be re-enthroned on the Capitoline Hill. In the exposition of his theme Wilson adopts the conventional device of a dream, in which he has a vision of two temples, one symbolising pagan philosophy, the other Christianity. In the first temple he is attended by a philosopher who expounds to him the conditions under which tranquillity is attainable by man's own unaided efforts ; in the second, he has for his guide St. Paul, who convincingly shows him that, not by his own good works, but by the grace of God,¹ he can attain salvation and the highest bliss. The fact that Wilson chose St. Paul as the exponent of Christian doctrine would seem to indicate his own leanings in the great controversy between Rome and Protestantism. That he had not actually broken with the Church of Rome is proved by the fact that before starting for Scotland, as we have seen, he had consulted Sadoletto as to the course he should follow in that country. It is certain, however, that there was much in that Church with which he was out of sympathy. In his Treatise, which we are considering, he speaks scathingly of the vice and indolence of the higher clergy, and he cordially expresses his approval of certain Italian reformers who were pressing for a religious renewal virtually along the lines of Luther.² More significant, however, is the fact that he approved of Henry VIII.'s

¹ Professor Robertson Smith says that Wilson ' ultimately reaches a doctrine as to the witness of the spirit and the assurance of grace, which breaks with the traditional Christianity of his time, and contains ethical motives akin to, though not identical with, those of the German Reformation.' (Article on Wilson in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.)

² *De Animi Tranquillitate*, pp. 3, 5, 242.

assumption of the Headship of the Church in England, and that, as we have seen, he actually wrote in defence of Henry's ecclesiastical policy. The truth seems to be that at the time of his death Wilson stood in the same relation to the Church as men like Erasmus and Buchanan. Both Erasmus and Buchanan were unsparing in their denunciation of its abuses, but both remained members of its communion, though in the end Buchanan went over to Protestantism. Had Wilson lived to settle in Scotland, the probability is that he would have done likewise.

From this sketch of Wilson's career, necessarily fragmentary as it is, we may yet conceive what manner of man he was. It is itself a striking tribute to his personality that he was admitted to intimacy with the first men of the age—men who were fashioning the destinies of kingdoms. That he should have commended himself to men so different as Wolsey, Cromwell, Fisher, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and Cardinal Sadoletto, is conclusive proof of the breadth of his interests, of his practical sagacity, of his tact in the ways of the world. But Wilson found his most congenial society, not among statesmen and diplomatists, but among men whose main concern was to make prevail that ideal of a *pietas litterata*, a cultured piety, which should combine the essential teaching of Christianity with the free outlook on life of classical antiquity. By his elevation of mind, his various accomplishments, and his gift of persuasion, Wilson was a natural leader in such a society. If we look for a kindred spirit among his countrymen, we may find him in Archbishop Leighton, that 'Christianised Plato,' as Coleridge calls him. In Leighton's discourses delivered as Principal of the University of Edinburgh, we have the same richness of classical culture in a mind 'naturally Christian,' the same spirit of renouncement, which yet did not preclude an active, practical beneficence. Leighton's lot was cast in a time which demanded a more strenuous nature than his, and had Wilson lived to return to his native country, his fate

would have been similar. In the civil and religious dissensions which then distracted Scotland, his quietism, like that of Leighton, might have been found an unseasonable virtue. As it was, he was spared the stern test, and he comes before us as one of the select spirits of his nation, somewhat veiled from our gaze, but with lineaments sufficiently distinguishable to justify us in paying tribute to him, as one who in his generation stood for the best that men then felt and knew.

LITERATURE AND HISTORY

THE title I have chosen for this paper certainly leaves much to be desired in point of clearness and precision. It may suggest, for example, a difference of opinion that exists regarding the manner in which history should be written. According to one view history should have nothing whatever to do with literature. What we want from history is fact only, and all narrative and exposition, however admirable, only obscure or distort the fact which it is our primary object to ascertain and estimate. According to this conception of history, the most trustworthy form in which past events can be presented is a *catalogue raisonné*, which will set out facts in their logical connections and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. The upholders of the other view maintain that the investigator of the facts is likely to understand them better than his reader, that his reflections regarding them must have an independent value of their own, and that the merit of his narrative or exposition will depend on the skill and force with which he presents his own views, on the logical arrangement of his materials, the clearness and attractiveness of his style. In this conception history becomes literature in a true sense, for the historian, to attain his ideal, has need of aesthetic no less than of scientific qualifications for his task.

The consideration of these two views regarding the most fruitful method of presenting the facts of history might be the subject of an interesting enquiry. On the present occasion, however, it is another theme to which I would invite your attention. What are the relations between literature and the

facts of history? What reciprocal light do they throw upon each other? How may we best study both to draw the fullest nutriment from them for our souls and minds? These questions, it is evident, may be regarded from two points of view—from the point of view of the reader of history and the point of view of its writer. Fortunately, the readers of history still outnumber its writers, and it may be more profitable to consider the point of view of the former class. It is from the reader's point of view, then, that the following remarks are made.

Regarded in their primary intention, history and literature may seem to be disparate and even antagonistic subjects. Taken in their essence, they make appeal to different desires and faculties of our nature. The primary aim of history is instruction, and when Bacon said that 'histories make men wise,' he implied that instruction must be the historian's main object. On the other hand, the primary aim of literature is not instruction but pleasure; its immediate appeal is not to the cognitive faculties, but to our emotions and our tastes. In point of fact, however, we cannot draw so hard and fast a line between the aim and scope of literature and history. There are histories which do afford pleasure as well as instruction, and there are purely literary productions which yield instruction as well as pleasure. Macaulay declared that he would make his history as interesting as a novel, and his publisher's cheque for £20,000 is a sufficiently cogent proof that he fulfilled his intention. Of George Eliot's novels it has been said that, as you read them, you feel as if you were in the confessional—which is surely instruction if anything can be.

In one sense, and a very important sense, every production in pure literature is history, and the larger its scope, the greater its scale—the deeper and wider is its historical significance. The most trifling occasional poem is as much the product of the age to which it belongs as of the poet who wrote it. The thoughts, the emotions that inspire it are drawn from the

spiritual and intellectual capital of the time, and the poet, so to speak, only draws his cheque on this funded capital which is the common property of his generation. True, his individual signature is affixed to the cheque; the poet, in so far as he is a real poet, has his own impression, his own vision of men and things. Nevertheless, the greatest and most important portion of the materials with which he works is impersonal, and he is only an inheritor of the common stock.

If this be true of the slighter productions of literature, it is true in a larger and deeper sense of the great masterpieces of all times. For in proportion to the range of the poet's sympathy and intelligence is the extent to which he appropriates and expresses the thought and experience of the age to which he belongs. Such works as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the Plays of Shakespeare, and *Paradise Lost*, are an epitome of the pre-occupations and speculations and aspirations of the times out of which they sprang. In Dante's great poem we have the presentation of almost every important interest that engaged the hearts and minds of his contemporaries. We find in it the official solution of human destiny in its eternal relations, and we find in it also the doubts and reserves with which that solution was accepted. In it, too, we find the clashing political and social ideals of the time, and the warring forces that imperilled the *unitas Catholica* which had been the ideal of the Mediaeval Church from its beginning. Above all, we find in it the *spirit* of the time—a spirit which reveals itself in the intemperance of the poet's passions, equally of love and of hate, and which led one critic, thinking of certain passages in the poem, to declare that it remains for ever a monument of human malevolence.

There can be no more instructive lesson in history than to pass from the poem of Dante to the Plays of Shakespeare. They are divided from each other by only three centuries, but what travail of thought and act and emotion had man passed through in that intervening period! Alike in form and in

substance the work of Dante and the work of Shakespeare belong to different worlds. The very centre of things is different for each. Dante's scheme of thought, as well in temporal as in spiritual things, had the rigidity and completeness of that system which his age accepted from Ptolemy as the mechanical explanation of the universe. For Shakespeare, on the other hand, everything was an open question. His thought and fancy play over men and things with the unchartered freedom of a mind for which dogmatic assertion is a vain assumption of certainty, where certainty is impossible. Doubtless the different geniuses of the two men partly explain their different points of view. Born in the age and in the circumstances of Dante, Shakespeare by no possibility could have had Dante's vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. But it is to history we must go for the adequate explanation of the difference in form and spirit that distinguishes their respective creations.

Between Dante's and Shakespeare's day the *unitas Catholica* had been fatally broken up; the philosophy, the science, the religious dogma of the Middle Age had ceased to dominate the mind of Christendom; and in their place had arisen those new conceptions of nature and man which were mainly due to the rediscovered world of classical antiquity. It was amid the ferment occasioned by this revolution that the genius of Shakespeare found its characteristic scope, and only by taking account of that revolution can we have any intelligent understanding of the substance of his work and of the spirit in which he regarded it.

The case of Shakespeare is the supreme illustration of Goethe's remark that he only can be said to know a poet who knows his age, but it is also an illustration of the essential relations between literature and history. We can have no adequate comprehension of the Shakespearian plays without regarding them as a product of the general mind of the age, but, on the other hand, how imperfect, how limited in depth

and scope, would our conception of that general mind be if Shakespeare had not been its exponent! Thus literature and history are the complements of each other, and the fulness of both is only realised when they are studied in their mutual relations.

The contrast between Dante and Shakespeare is hardly greater than the contrast between Shakespeare and Milton. In contrasting the work of Shakespeare and Milton we have again to take due account of their different types of genius. In no circumstances can we imagine that Shakespeare's free outlook on man and the world could have been possible to Milton. For Milton as for Dante it was an intellectual and spiritual necessity that he should have a definite system of thought embracing every subject that concerns the temporal and spiritual interests of men. This contrast between the mind of Shakespeare and the mind of Milton doubtless determined the fundamental distinction between their respective creations, but it is not an adequate explanation of the ideas that underlie them. In Milton's day, both in England and on the Continent, men were preoccupied with problems which had not taken definite shape in the age of Shakespeare. By the date when Milton had reached maturity the Protestant scholastic theology was fully developed and in the third book of *Paradise Lost* we have its classical exposition, just as in Dante we have the classical exposition of the scholastic theology of the Middle Age. In Milton's preoccupation with those discussions which he assigns to the rebel angels in Pandemonium :

Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,

he is the child of his time, and his concern for these problems is understood and properly appraised only when we have some acquaintance with the contemporary schools of Protestant thought. But, further—between Shakespeare's and Milton's day there had been development along the lines opened up by

the Renaissance as well as by the Reformation. As the Renaissance found expression in Shakespeare and his contemporaries, it was the lust of life, the free play of human nature, that was the predominating note. By Milton's day the influence of the revival of Classical antiquity had passed into a new phase. In literature it had now become a restraining and chastening influence as was to be signally illustrated in the great French writers of the seventeenth century—Racine, Boileau, Pascal and Bossuet. And in no great spirit is this new discipline more notably exemplified than in Milton, in whose work the new conception of classical purity and restraint of expression has its highest embodiment in English literature. Doubtless in any age Milton's genius would have tended to severity of form; but, had he lived when the Renaissance was at its flood-tide, when men's minds were intoxicated with the new wine of antiquity, such purity of form as he attained would have been impossible even to his genius. But he fell upon an age when maturer and discreeter ideas regarding the classical models prevailed, and it was these ideas working together with his own native instincts that enabled him to produce a poem which by its scope, its style, its structure is comparable to the great creations of antiquity.

It is the great poets who are the supreme interpreters of their age, for it is in their creations that the different sides of human nature find the fullest expression: in the words of Hamlet, they show us 'the very body of the time, his form and pressure.' But to receive the full impression of any age, not only its poets but its literature as a whole must be present to our minds. A book like Bacon's *Essays*, for example, is an indispensable commentary on the age in which it was produced. The very titles of these *Essays* suggest the main interests of Bacon's contemporaries. Take such titles as these: 'Of Unitie in Religion,' 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation,' 'Of Seditions and Troubles,' 'Of Cunning,' 'Of Plantations,' 'Of the true Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates.' Bacon's

choice of such themes and his manner of handling them give us a deeper insight into the time than any state documents revealing the machinations of statesmen and diplomatists. When Bacon chooses such a subject as 'Unity in Religion' on which to discourse, we are reminded of the great Protestant schism of the sixteenth century, and its determining influence on international relations and the relations of subjects to their rulers. When he writes on 'Dissimulation and Cunning,' we are reminded of the new diplomacy which was the birth of the same century, and of which Machiavelli was the arch-deviser and codifier. Thus, Bacon's book is a veritable transcript of his time—of its engrossing problems, of its ethical standards, of its conceptions of the general and individual life of man. On the other hand, the only adequate commentary on these *Essays* is the history of Europe from the day when Luther broke with Rome. Without this commentary the book loses half its meaning, for we thus miss what it is all-important to know in the case of every book—how much of it is the author's own, and how much of it is the general property of his time.

Hitherto I have been mainly emphasising the importance of history as throwing light on literature; let me now say a few words on the light which literature throws on history. It is the unfortunate disability of the writer of history that he cannot jump off his own shadow. Do what he will he cannot get away from himself; his own temperament, his own sympathies and prepossessions, his own vision of life (for we all have one, whether we know it or not) create an atmosphere around him through which he sees, not the real lineaments of the past, but a spectral illusion which he mistakes for the reality. In the often-quoted words of Faust to the enquiring student Wagner, we have the final expression of the historian's impotence to divest himself of his own personality and to see a past age as it appeared to the men who made it. 'My friend,' says Faust, 'past times are for us a book with seven

seals: what you call the spirit of past times is in truth but the spirit of him who seeks to reproduce them.' Historians may, indeed, attain to varying degrees of impartiality; some may be more exact than others; may take more comprehensive views, may have a keener insight into the significance of the facts that come under their notice, but they cannot dissolve the refracting medium which is indeed the emanation of their own being.

But not only does his own personality come between the historian and the past; the age in which he lives casts its own shadow over all previous time. How differently did the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries regard the great events and the great characters that have marked the course of man's destinies! In great things and in small the judgments of the two centuries stand in equal contrast. Take one judgment by a representative mind of the eighteenth century. David Hume, in one of his literary essays, had occasion to compare Bunyan and Parnell, the author of *The Hermit*, and his judgment on their relative merits is that Bunyan is to Parnell what a mole-hill is to a mountain. Can we imagine Hume pronouncing such a judgment had he been born in 1811 instead of 1711? But, in point of fact, it is not only Hume that is speaking when he pronounces his opinion on the relative merits of Bunyan and Parnell, but the age of which he is the representative spokesman.

But let us take another example which illustrates the wider significance of the different attitudes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards the epoch-making events of the past. Like Hume, the historian Gibbon is one of the representative minds of the eighteenth century. His point of view with regard to the spiritual forces in human history is that of the movement, known as the *Aufklärung*, the Enlightenment, and in his famous chapters on the rise and spread of Christianity we have this attitude exemplified in all its implications. His account of the development of the Christian

doctrines and institutions, as we know, is a masterpiece of irony—

‘Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer.’

He records with all his mastery of lucid exposition the external events of the Christian movement. He expounds the policy of the Church and the policy of the empire, and seeks to show that by the concatenation of circumstances Constantine the Great was constrained to identify himself with the new religion. The problem, as it presents itself to Gibbon, is one simply of dynamical forces—these forces being the clashing interests of sects and parties, the vanity and ambition of individuals, the superstition of the masses. By the fortuitous working of these forces it came about that Christianity emerged triumphant from its death-struggle with Paganism, and by the same fortuitous means it continued to maintain its supremacy. Of religion as an instinct in man, a force that lay behind all doctrines and institutions, behind the policies of statesmen and ecclesiastics, Gibbon had no conception; and if the conception had been presented to him he would have regarded it as the lingering delusion of the ages of unenlightenment.

By temperament, Gibbon was unsympathetic with enthusiasm in any form; in no age could he have been fired with ardour for any cause. But, had he lived in the nineteenth century instead of the eighteenth, he would not have written of Christianity as he did. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the philosophy of the ‘Enlightenment’ no longer satisfied the minds of thinking men. They realised that religion was a constituent element of human nature and in itself one of the potent factors in the development of humanity, that it was not a figment devised by cunning priests at a given moment as a convenient means of exploiting their fellow creatures. To illustrate the different points of view of the two centuries, let us take a criticism passed on Gibbon’s account of the spread of Christianity by one of the most eminent critics of the nineteenth—the French critic Ste. Beuve.

Personally Ste. Beuve was at the same point of view with regard to Christianity as Gibbon. He regarded it as a purely natural development, which can be adequately explained by human nature itself and the historical conditions under which the Christian faith made its way into the world. But what is his judgment on the explanation given by Gibbon in his famous chapters? Gibbon, he says, writes of religion like a mandarin. What he meant was that Gibbon dealt with religion in a purely external fashion, and that he was incapable of understanding its real nature and the modes of its working. And Ste. Beuve goes on to make a notable remark which Gibbon could never have made, though both were at one in their attitude towards historical Christianity. 'The moral innovation effected by Christianity,' says the French critic, 'was that it inculcated a keener, a more absolute sentiment of truth.' And it is in this keener sense of truth that he finds the explanation of that intolerance of other religions which distinguished the Christian from the Pagan. No doubt Ste. Beuve had finer critical instincts than Gibbon, but had he lived in the eighteenth instead of in the nineteenth century, even his finer instincts would not have suggested such judgments as those that have been quoted.

The conclusion is that the writer of history sees past ages through a double veil—the veil of his own personality and that of the age to which he himself belongs. But is there any means by which the reader can escape from the double illusion which is thus woven round the past? The question is one which it is the business of philosophy to answer, for it is simply the old question whether mortals are capable of envisaging the ultimate reality of things. Waiving this question, therefore, let us ask another which can be more simply answered. How may the reader of history best guard himself from the inevitably personal presentment of any given period of the past by the later historians of that period, and how can he most effectually assure himself that his own illusions are at

least his own? The judicious reader has, of course, one means always at his disposal. He can make his own reserves with regard to the personal element in the work of the writer who is engaging him. He will see that the historian, belonging to some particular school of thought, is apt to select facts and pass judgment on them in accordance with his own point of view. And he will make his qualifications with reference not only to the historian's opinions, but also to the mental qualities which are exhibited in his work. He will make the necessary abatements according as the historian is rhetorical or sentimental, rash or unduly cautious, optimistic, or pessimistic in his outlook on human affairs. Such checks as these are in the power of every reader, but they will enable him only partially to control the general picture of a period presented by another mind. Fully to control it, he would require such an amount of knowledge as would enable him to form an independent picture of his own.

But there is another means by which the reader of history may effectually guard himself against the idiosyncrasies of individual historians. It is in the literature of any period that we have the veritable expression of its spirit, defeatured by no distorting medium. By acquainting ourselves, says Bacon, with the substance, the modes of expression of the literature of any age, we, as it were by incantation, evoke its genius from the dead. Acquainted with this 'genius' of the age, we are enabled to see its events, its men in their true lineaments and proportions. The chief cause of misconception regarding the great characters of past times is that they are so frequently estimated out of relation to the age to which they belong. To correct such misconceptions not only knowledge is required, but the constant reminding ourselves that we must not apply present standards to their words and actions. Take, for example, one great man who has already been mentioned—the poet Milton. The contrast between Milton the poet and Milton the controversialist is so shocking to modern feeling

that it is almost inconceivable that they should be one and the same man. When we think of the grace and pure beauty of such poems as *Lycidas*, *L'Allegro*, and *Comus*, of the sublimity of *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, we are at a loss to understand how the same hand could have written such things as the replies to Salmasius. In point of fact, however, the scurrilous and brutal language of Milton towards his adversaries had been the current coin of scholars for more than a century before his day. In their controversies with each other these scholars, humanists they called themselves, thought that in the interests of truth it was perfectly legitimate to traduce the private character of those who differed from them. Peter Ramus, the unflinching critic of the mediaeval Aristotle, was constantly reminded by his antagonists that he was the son of a charcoal-burner. Salmasius exulted that he had knocked Milton blind in the course of their repeated encounters, and Scioppius, another humanist, congratulated himself on having killed Joseph Scaliger by the exposure of his vaunted pedigree. The fact that Milton's controversial style was not peculiar to himself does not indeed make us regret the less that he indulged in it, but it reminds us that we must not judge him by modern canons of good taste and feeling.

The difficulty of attaching their proper meaning to the spoken and written words of a past age is, indeed, one of the chief obstacles in the way of understanding it. We read a letter, a sermon, a speech of a past century; we attach a definite meaning to every word, and we imagine we have taken in the full mind of the writer or speaker. But the truth is that words expressive of the deeper thoughts and feelings of men vary in suggestion with every age. Words that to our age savour of unctuous hypocrisy once expressed honest and genuine feeling. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries biblical phraseology was applied in a way that the hasty modern reader is apt to set down as cant—the truth being that the English Bible was then a new book whose words came home to men's

minds with a freshness and point of which familiarity has deprived them.

The later historians of a past age cannot enable us to appreciate those delicate shades of thought and feeling which distinguish it from every other. The only means of acquiring this power of appreciation is to make ourselves familiar with the literature of the period in question. But we cannot read all the literature of the time, and it is necessary to determine what portions of it may be read with most profit. Lord Bacon, in the passage already quoted, distinctly says that it is enough even for the historian himself that he should 'taste' (*degustare*) the literature of the period, whose history he undertakes to write. For the reader of history, therefore, it is sufficient that he should familiarise himself with the chief literary productions of the period he may choose for special study. As has already been said, it is in the representative poets that we find the spirit of the age in its most concentrated, most comprehensive, and most vital expression. But there is another form of literature which, if the age has produced it, is invaluable for its adequate understanding. In certain periods there have been minds with a genius for systematising the general thought and experience, and for condensing them in a great work, which remains as a perpetual memorial of the epoch that produced it. Such a work, for example, is the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes—a book whose scope and intention embody the ideals, carried no doubt to extremes, of similarly-minded Englishmen of that generation. Read from the point of view of history, Hobbes's book is a revelation of the conflicting ideals in politics and religion which underlay the great struggle between Crown and Parliament in the first half of the seventeenth century. At the close of that century we have another thinker, John Locke, whose work was in no less degree conditioned by the experience of his time, of which it remains the equally durable memorial. The value of the work of such thinkers is that it not only reveals the conflicting ideals of



their own time, but also links that time with the past and future of the total experience of the race. When we lay down Hobbes and take up Locke, we become aware of the never-ceasing endeavour of humanity to adjust itself to the changing conditions under which its life is lived. And what is history but the tale of this endeavour on the part of man since he first awoke to conscious purpose ?

One of the great masters of history has said that the highest result of its study is the acquired ability to appreciate the difference between times and countries, nations and races. The full attainment of this power implies a sweep of knowledge which can be the acquisition of only a few. But to acquire a familiarity even with one other age than our own is a great intellectual gain. It saves us from the mechanical acceptance of standards which we are apt to think absolute for all time ; it supplies us, so to speak, with a parallax from which we can more adequately estimate men and events in all countries and in all ages. The ability to see things in their true relations marks, in fact, the distinction between the educated and the uneducated mind. The whole process of education, we may say, is to lift men out of their immediate surroundings and to provide them with larger measures of things. And for such as have a predilection for what are called the humane studies, there could perhaps be no better discipline towards this end than the mastery of some one period of the past, which by the greatness of its events and the eminence of its actors marks an epoch in the history of humanity. The period we choose will be determined by our own personal affinities, for there are periods which appeal to our individual temperaments and modes of thought more powerfully than do others. Some will be attracted by such a century as the eighteenth, with its love of measure and proportion, others by such a century as the sixteenth, when human passions had their freest play and the fountains of the great deep were broken up. The period once chosen, the method of study I have suggested

can hardly fail to result in a living acquaintance with the specific characteristics that distinguish it from every other. As our study deepens, these characters appear with increasing clearness of definition, and the spectacle rises before us of a world, inhabited by men of like passions with our own, but whose aims, whose interests, whose mode of thought exhibit human nature under other aspects, and remind us that the preoccupations of our own day are likewise but another passing stage in the general experience of humanity.

JOHN NAPIER OF MERCHISTON.¹

WRITING about the middle of the eighteenth century, David Hume proclaimed John Napier of Merchiston as 'the person to whom the title of a *great man* is more justly due than to any other whom his country ever produced.' This judgment of Hume is the more remarkable, seeing he was himself naturally disposed to exalt literature above science. Moreover there had been another Scot, partly a contemporary of Napier, who in the estimation of many of his countrymen and of many in continental circles might have disputed the palm with him. George Buchanan had been described by Milton's antagonist Salmasius as 'the greatest man of his age,' by Grotius as *Scotiae illud numen*; and a stream of testimony since their day has confirmed their opinion. Hume's own ruling passion, as he tells us, was to distinguish himself in letters; when he awarded the first place among his countrymen to Napier, therefore, it was doubtless from an enlightened conviction that his work had been of the greater service to humanity. Both Buchanan and Napier, it may be noted in passing, received one remarkable tribute to the impressiveness of their individualities; both in different ways appealed to the imagination of the people. By reason of his association with James VI. and his reputation for caustic and witty sayings, Buchanan, the fastidious scholar of the Renaissance, was transformed into a Court fool; and Napier, the explorer of

¹ This sketch of Napier's life is mainly based on Mark Napier's *Memoirs of John Napier of Merchiston: His Lineage, Life, and Times* (Edinburgh, 1834), and on entries in the *Privy Council Register of Scotland*.

the secrets of nature, passed among his countrymen for a trafficker with Satan.

Even to-day a certain mystery surrounds the figure of the Laird of Merchiston. Appearing at the time he did, and in an environment seemingly so strangely in contrast with his special pursuits, he strikes us as the most singular of apparitions among his contemporaries. He had one fellow-countryman, indeed, as a predecessor in the study of physical science. In the thirteenth century Michael Scott, like his contemporary Roger Bacon, had given his attention to that study; had gained a continental reputation as wide as Napier's, and an equally evil name among his countrymen of being in league with the infernal powers. But between Michael and Napier we can name no Scot whose interest lay specially in the domain of science, and the explanation is simple. In Scotland, as in other countries, the universities were the exclusive centres of intellectual activity, and the studies at the universities were under the sole dominion of the Church, which naturally laid its ban on investigations that might imperil its own teaching. By his isolation Napier is thus wrapped in a certain mystery, and the mystery is deepened by the fact that we know so little of him, and that what we do know is at times strangely incongruous with the main preoccupations of his life.

He came of an ancestry that appears to have had the general characteristics of their age and class, and what is interesting is that Napier, the philosopher, had evidently his fair share of these. The history of the family, which begins with Alexander Napier, a burgess of Edinburgh, in the first half of the fifteenth century, shows that they were a strenuous race, by capacity and energy of character well able to advance their interests and to hold their own throughout a time when force made light of law. Most of them played a more or less important part in the public affairs of the country. The second Napier was Comptroller of the King's Household, and was twice sent abroad on foreign embassies; the third sat in Parliament;

and several received the honour of knighthood. Three of them fell in battle : one at Sauchieburn,¹ a second at Flodden, and a third at Pinkie. With their honours they also gained lands, and on the death of his father John succeeded to what was for the time a valuable estate. The original Castle of Merchiston with which the Napiers are associated appears to have been built at some period during the fifteenth century, and, though it underwent much alteration in the succeeding times, it must have been an imposing structure from the first. In Napier's own day Craigmillar Castle and Merchiston Castle were the two strongest places in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. Its proximity to the Scottish capital gave an importance to the Napier family which is illustrated by a significant fact : during the fifteenth century no fewer than three Napiers were provosts of Edinburgh. As at that period only persons of power and influence in the neighbourhood were chosen to the office, the inference is that the Napiers were in a position to be protectors of the city's interests.

Sir Archibald Napier, the seventh of Merchiston, and the father of John, fully maintained the repute of his ancestors for energy and sagacity. He added to the ancestral domains—specially in the Lennox, with which we shall find his son afterwards associated. In his day, also, he played a notable public part. He was a Justice-Depute under the Earl of Argyll, and for more than thirty years was Master of the Mint—a fact to be remembered as involving his son in an unpleasant experience. What we have specially to note in connection with Sir Archibald, however, is that he identified himself with Protestantism from the first. He sat several times in the General Assemblies of the Reformed Church, but apparently his zeal was not such as to satisfy either religious party in the country. When in 1570 civil war broke out between the supporters of Queen Mary and the supporters of her son, his conduct

¹ It should be said that it is only a conjecture that the third Napier fell at Sauchieburn.

was so dubious that he incurred the hostility of both, and his ancestral castle suffered at the hands of King's men and Queen's men alike. But the fact that he was really a Protestant was to have a decisive influence on the career of his son. The inventor of logarithms inherited the religious opinions of his father, and held them with an intensity that received remarkable expression in a book which brought him greater fame in his own day than his contribution to mathematical science. Sir Archibald was twice married—his first wife, the mother of John, being Janet Bothwell, daughter of Sir Francis Bothwell, and sister of Adam Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney, known to history as an active agent in effecting the unhallowed union of Mary and the Earl of Bothwell. By his first marriage he had three children, of whom John was the eldest ; by his second he had ten, with whom John was to have his own troubles.

The 'marvellous Merchiston' (so he was known to the populace of his day) was born at Merchiston Castle in 1550. The period in which his birth and boyhood fell is the most momentous in the national history, and it determined and gave their peculiar character to his fundamental conceptions of human life and destiny. At the date of his birth the controversy had already begun which was eventually to cleave in twain the history of the Scottish people. The issue whether Roman Catholicism or Protestantism was to prevail was already joined. In 1546, four years before Napier was born, George Wishart was condemned by the Church and burned as a heretic, and in the same year Cardinal Beaton, the principal agent in his death, was assassinated. In 1547 John Knox began the mission which, after an interval, he was to see crowned with success. During the first ten years of Napier's life the struggle between the two religions was virtually settled. Between the years 1550 and 1560 the country was distracted by civil war, one party being for the old religion and alliance with France, the other for Protestantism and alliance with England. The contest ended in the victory of the Protestant party, and in

1560 a Convention of the Estates set up Protestantism as the national religion. It is in youth that the strongest and most permanent prepossessions and prejudices are formed, and we may trace the origin of Napier's abiding horror of the Church of Rome to the air which he breathed in the opening years of his life. As we shall see, it came to be his burning conviction that the salvation of mankind was bound up with the overthrow of the Papacy.

Of his early days no record has been preserved, though we know that they were mainly spent at Merchiston Castle. We do not even know where he received his early education. The High School of Edinburgh had existed from 1519, and the sons of barons were in the habit of attending it; but from a letter of his uncle, the Bishop of Orkney, to the elder Napier we are led to infer that John may have been educated at home. 'I pray you, Sir,' the Bishop writes in 1560, 'to send your son John to the schools, either to France or Flanders, for he can learn no good at home, nor get any profit in this most perilous world, that he may be saved in it, that he may do friends (*sic*) after honour and profit, as I doubt not but he will.'

In 1563, the year of his mother's death, John was sent to the University of St. Andrews, the mother university of Scotland. He was only thirteen, but this was the usual age at which lads then entered the universities. Of the three colleges that composed the University, St. Salvator's was chosen for him—possibly because its Head was the most distinguished teacher of his day in Scotland. He was Dr. John Rutherford, who for many reasons was a remarkable person. He had been educated in France, and had taught in one of the most famous schools in that country—the Collège de Guyenne in Bordeaux, where Buchanan had also taught. With Buchanan, also, he had gone on the ill-fated expedition to the lately founded University of Coimbra, in Portugal, the new professors of which were eventually dispersed by the Jesuits—Buchanan as the most aggressive heretic of the band, being consigned

to the dungeon of the Inquisition in Lisbon. Intellectually Rutherford is interesting as combining the study of philosophy with a taste for humane letters. He wrote on Aristotle, though he wrote, not in the Latin style of the Schoolmen, but in the style of the scholars of the Renaissance. During his residence in St. Andrews, Napier was boarded with Rutherford, who, from what we know of him, must have been an uncomfortable housemate. His temper was so violent that he kept his colleagues in perpetual hot water. The very year of Napier's stay in St. Andrews, Rutherford received a public rebuke from the authorities of the University for showing himself 'too hasty and impatient,' and he was admonished 'not to let the sun go down upon his wrath, and to study to bridle his tongue, and conduct himself with greater humility and mildness.' In spite of his unhappy temper, however, Rutherford was well fitted to impress the youth who sat at his feet, and doubtless Napier partly learned from him his interest in theology and philosophy as well as the direct and simple Latin style which he afterwards came to write.

In an interesting autobiographical passage in the address to 'The Godly and Christian Reader,' prefixed to his book on the Apocalypse, Napier tells us what was the dominant idea he carried with him from St. Andrews: 'In my tender yeers and barne age at Saint Androes at the Schools, having, on the one part, contracted a loving familiarity with a certain Gentleman, a Papist, and, on the other part, being attentive to the sermons of that worthy man of God, Master Christopher Goodman, teaching upon the Apocalypse, I was so moved in admiration against the blindnesse of Papists, that could not most evidently see their seven-hilled city, Rome, painted out there so lively by Saint John as the mother of all spiritual whoredom, that not only burst I out in reasoning against my said familiar, but also from thenceforth I determined with myself (by the assistance of God's spirit) to employ my studie and diligence to search out the remanent mysteries of that

holy book. . . .’ The Christopher Goodman here mentioned was an Englishman, who had been a fellow-worker with John Knox in the Reformation first in Geneva and afterwards in Scotland, and was now settled as a Reformed minister in St. Andrews. He held the same opinions as Knox in religion and politics, was a Calvinist in doctrine, and believed in the right of subjects to rebel against their rulers under certain conditions. That Napier admired Goodman in youth and approved of him in maturer life throws a clear light on his own views regarding the burning questions that divided the men of his day.

It is uncertain how long Napier remained in St. Andrews, but, as he left the University without taking a degree, his stay there was probably short. There is some reason to believe that on leaving St. Andrews he studied for some years abroad, thus following a custom common at the time with the sons of Scottish nobles and gentlemen. Wherever he spent them, of these years we have no record ; and the next mention we find of him is in 1571, when he was settled in Scotland. The intervening years had been portentous ones in the national history. They had seen Mary’s marriage with Darnley, Darnley’s murder, the dethronement of Mary, the coronation of her son James VI., and the establishment of a regency during his minority. In the years that were to come, till near the close of the century, one revolution in State and Church was to follow another, and Napier was to have his own share in both.

When we come upon Napier in 1571 he is domiciled, not in Merchiston Castle, but at Gartness, in the parish of Drymen in Stirlingshire, where his father possessed lands ; and here we are to imagine him as mainly residing till his father’s death in 1608. In 1572 he married Elizabeth Stirling, daughter of Sir James Stirling of Keir, whose estate adjoined that of the Napiers in Menteith. About the same date we find Napier engaged in building a spacious mansion at Gartness, on the

banks of the Endrick, with a garden, an orchard, and the usual offices attached to the mansions of country gentlemen of the time.¹ During the years 1570-72 raged the 'Douglas Wars' between the supporters of Mary on the one side and the supporters of her son on the other. There is no more lamentable page in Scottish history. 'You should have seen,' writes the historian Spottiswoode, who was a child at the time, 'fathers against their sons, sons against their fathers, brother fighting against brother, nigh kinsmen and others allied together as enemies seeking one the destruction of another. . . . The very young ones scarce taught to speak had these words in their mouths and were sometimes observed to divide and have childish contests in that quarrel.' The Queen's party had gained possession of the Castle of Edinburgh, and its recovery was the main object of the party of the King. Edinburgh, therefore, was the centre of the internecine strife, and, as we have seen, Merchiston Castle was more than once roughly handled by both parties. Napier, however, we are to suppose, in his distant country retreat, saw nothing of these wild doings, on the issue of which the future of the kingdom depended, since the capture of the Castle of Edinburgh by the King's party finally decided that Protestantism was to prevail.

But Napier was no absent-minded dreamer, indifferent to his own and to public affairs. From what we know of him, indeed, he appears to have been a man of counsel and even of action. In affairs of business he was the adviser of his own family, and he was consulted as an oracle by men in divers walks of life. As it happens, there are references in contemporary records to certain of his actions, which go to prove that in many respects he was a child of his age and well able

¹ Some ruins still mark its site. According to the writer in the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, it was a tradition in the neighbourhood that Napier was born at Edinbellie, in the parish of Balfron. A monument was even erected to commemorate the supposed fact.

to hold his own with its wildest spirits. These references bear both upon his public and his private action, and a few may be selected as throwing a curious light on the character of the man who is generally known to the world solely as the inventor of logarithms and a revealer of the mysteries of the Apocalypse.

We have seen how passionately Napier held the opinions of the Protestant party in politics and religion. For that party the policy of James VI. was such as to keep them in chronic anxiety regarding its ultimate drift. James's one ambition was to succeed Elizabeth on the throne of England, whether by the aid of Protestants or Catholics was indifferent to him. His game, therefore, was to hold the balance, so far as he could, between his Protestant and Catholic subjects, the latter being still a powerful body in the kingdom. In 1593 a discovery was made which confirmed the worst fears of the ministers of the Reformed Church, and the action of Napier proved that he shared these fears to the full. The discovery made was that certain Catholic nobles and others were inviting Philip II. of Spain to send an army to Scotland with the object of effecting the conquest of Britain—an enterprise which the great Armada of 1588 had so miserably failed to accomplish. The General Assembly of the Church, panic-stricken at the peril that now seemed impending, besieged the king with demands for immediate and effectual dealing with the enemies of Church and State. On three different occasions Napier accompanied deputations sent by the Assembly to lay its protest before the king. But he took a bolder step on his own responsibility—a step which proved not only the strength of his convictions but his courage in maintaining them. In the same exciting year, 1593, appeared his wonderful book, *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John*, and it was accompanied by a letter addressed to the king, the frank speaking of which was worthy of John Knox. One passage from it will sufficiently illustrate its tenor and its general tone. 'Therefore, Sir,' he wrote, 'let it be your Majesty's continuall

study (as called and charged thereunto by God) to reforme the universall enormities of your country, and first (taking example of the princely prophet David) to begin at your Majesty's owne house, familie and court, and purge the same of all suspicion of Papists and Atheists and Newtrals, whereof this Revelation foretellet that the number shall greatly increase in these latter daies. For shall any Prince be able to be one of the destroyers of that great seate, and a purger of the world from Antichristianisme, who purgeth not his owne countrie? Shall he purge his whole countrie who purgeth not his owne house? Or shall he purge his house, who is not purged himself by private meditations with his God? ' Napier, it is clear, was a man of his time, with no hesitations regarding the absolute truth of his own convictions.

Other references in contemporary records show that with or against his own will Napier had to give his attention to other matters than mathematics and the Apocalypse. Thus we read, under the date of 1591, that his father had to become surety for him that the Earl of Moray and others would sustain no harm from him. The reference throws light on the conditions under which Napier lived in his home at Gartness. The tenants of the different proprietors in the neighbourhood were at continual feud seizing every opportunity of doing mischief to each other. Napier's tenants, it appears, had been specially aggressive, and a protest to the Privy Council had resulted in this demand on their landlord to look better after their future behaviour. That Napier was a stickler for his rights and resolute in upholding them is illustrated by several incidents in his life. In 1602 we find him lodging a protest on his own account before the Privy Council. The magistrates of Edinburgh, he complained, had illegally, though with the warrant of the Council, erected buildings for plague-stricken persons on his land in the district of the Sciennes. The complaint placed the Council in a dilemma. They had illegally granted a warrant for the erection of the buildings in

question, but the presence of the plague made them necessary at the time—the Sciennes district being then at a considerable distance from the town. Necessity overriding law, the Council ordained that Napier should permit the magistrates to retain the use of the buildings till the following Candlemas, all his rights being conserved.

Napier was not so successful in another action which he brought before the Council. The date is 1613, when he had been Laird of Merchiston for five years, and the action is connected with his lands in the district of Menteith, which was managed by his bailie, by name John Mushat. The bailie's report on which the complaint was founded was to the following effect :—One Thomas Grahame had conceived 'a deadly hatred and malice against the Laird of Merchiston,' and had sought by all manner of indirect means to do him injury. Grahame was aware that the Laird of Merchiston was now 'heavily diseased with the pain of the gout and unable to repair to the said lands for holding the courts thereon, and doing of justice to his poor tenants who laboured the same,' and, availing himself of the opportunity, Grahame had grievously molested Merchiston's dependants. The charges against Grahame may be given, as they throw light on the world in which Napier lived. Grahame had evicted a tenant on Napier's lands on the ground that he had failed to pay his share of corn due to him ; had 'after a very insolent manner' cut in pieces a plaid belonging to another tenant ; had personally assaulted Napier's bailie while holding his regular court of justice ; and finally had 'most barbarously gored' a horse belonging to a third tenant. The judgment of the Council was that the prosecution had 'succumbed and failed in proving of any point of the said complaint.'

Another litigation in which Napier was engaged illustrates the tenacity with which he maintained what he conceived to be his rights. His father, Sir Archibald, was Master of the Mint from 1576, and at his death in 1608 had in his possession

certain documents and materials pertaining to his office. His successor in the Mint, one John Aitcheson, described as 'portioner of Inveresk,' demanded their delivery from John Napier, now Laird of Merchiston. The demand was refused, and Aitcheson brought the matter before the Privy Council. Sir Archibald on his deathbed, so Aitcheson alleged, had, in the presence of his son John, given orders that the documents in question should be delivered to Aitcheson as his successor in the Mint. Summoned to the bar of the Council, Napier produced twenty-six documents, but under the protest that he did so, not as heir to his father, but as having been delivered to him officially by the Sheriff-Depute of Edinburgh. Apparently, however, he did not on this occasion produce all the documents demanded, since an entry in the Register of the Council a year and a half later states that he eventually produced thirty-eight in all, when he received a full discharge for himself and his heirs.

The most singular affair in Napier's life that is known to us remains to be told, and it suggests curious reflections regarding the character of the man. As has been said, he passed among the people of his time for a dealer in the black arts, and many tales were told of his superhuman powers. He had as a familiar a jet-black cock, which had the uncanny gift of revealing to him the most secret thoughts of his domestics.¹ On one occasion he was reputed to have given triumphant proof of the creature's weird attributes. Some of his belongings had disappeared, and suspecting his domestics, he coated the cock with soot and shut it up in a dark room. Each domestic in turn was then ordered to enter the room and stroke the cock's back—having been previously informed that the cock would crow when the guilty person touched it. The cock remained silent throughout the procession, but the clean hands of one

¹ The Napiers were the hereditary Poulterers of the King, who was entitled to demand an annual gift of poultry from them. This fact may have originated the story of Napier's familiar.

of the domestics conclusively proved that he was the criminal. Another story, current till recent times in the neighbourhood of Merchiston, shows the popular belief in his enchantments. The pigeons of a neighbouring laird provoked him by eating his corn; he protested, and threatened to poind (impound) them. 'Do so, if you can,' was the answer. The next morning the fields were covered with pigeons apparently under enchantment—their impounding by the magician's servants immediately following.

It was doubtless Napier's reputation for powers beyond those of ordinary men that in 1594 brought him into alliance with a dubious associate. This associate was Robert Logan of Restalrig, known in Scottish history by his connection with the famous Gowrie Conspiracy. As his past career had shown, Logan was a desperado, ready for any deed of devilry. He had obtained possession of Fast Castle, a wild fortress—perched on a precipitous rock overhanging the German Ocean—of which James VI. said that the man who built it must have been a knave at heart. In this stronghold Logan entertained associates of the same feather as himself—highway robbery being one of their means of securing a livelihood. It is with this outlaw (for outlaw he was) that we find the author of *A Plaine Discovery* and the inventor of logarithms entering into a strange compact.

There was a tradition, common in the case of similar strongholds, that in Fast Castle a valuable treasure lay concealed. The finding of such a treasure would have been a godsend to Logan in his desperate fortunes, and as the one man in the kingdom likely to ensure a successful search, he applied to Napier. Napier responded, and with his own hand drew up a contract, which still exists. From the nature of the document, indeed, it could hardly have been entrusted to other hands. Here are the principal conditions agreed on by the two confederates. Napier was to do his utmost 'by the grace of God' to discover the treasure, and if it were found his share was to be a third. He was to be safely convoyed to and from Edin-

burgh, and on his return to Merchiston he was, in the presence of Logan, to destroy the contract. Should no treasure be found, Napier was to leave it to Logan to decide what satisfaction he should have for his pains. Such was the singular covenant to which we find the pious mystic of the *Plaine Discovery* pledging himself. The story does not suggest pleasant reflections, but we must remember the times when Napier lived. 'One century,' it has been said, 'may judge another century, but only his own century may judge the individual'; and this incident in Napier's life is a case for the application of the dictum. In point of fact, as the contract was not destroyed, we are to infer that it did not take effect. Be it added that subsequent documents from Napier's hand seem to imply that he afterwards carefully avoided all dealings with Logan and his kin.

A document of another kind, also from Napier's own hand, and still preserved in the library of Lambeth Palace, illustrates the restless ingenuity of his mind. It is a list of warlike engines which 'by the grace of God and worke of expert craftsmen' he hoped to produce 'for defence of this Iland.' These terrific engines, which were to render Britain safe from all her enemies, were as follows:—a burning mirror which would consume an enemy's ships 'at whatever appointed distance'; another mirror constructed on a different principle which would produce like effects; a piece of artillery which would sweep a whole field clear of an enemy¹; a chariot which would

¹ Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty thus describes this engine: 'He [Napier] had the skill to frame an engine . . . which by vertue of some secret springs, inward resorts, and other implements and materials fit for the purpose, inclosed within the bowels thereof, had the power . . . to clear a field of four miles circumference of all the living creatures exceeding a foot of height, that should be found thereon, how near soever they might be to one another, by which means he made it appear that he was able, with the help of this machine alone, to kill thirty thousand Turks without the hazard of one Christian. Of this it is said that (upon a wager) he gave proof upon a large plain in Scotland to the destruction of a great many herds of cattel and flocks of sheep, whereof some were distant from other half a mile on all sides and some a whole mile.'

be like 'a moving mouth of mettle and scatter destruction on all sides'; and finally 'devises of sayling under water, with divers other devises and stratagemes for harming of the enemyes.' But Napier's ingenuity was also turned to more innocent applications, and we are told that he was the first to suggest that salt was an efficacious fertiliser of the soil, and the first also to suggest certain novel methods of agriculture.

A few more contemporary references to Napier may conclude this sketch. In 1601 we find him becoming surety for a kinsman, resident in Edinburgh, that he will not have Mass said in his house. In 1608 he was appointed, along with another, to fix the price of boots and shoes within the burgh. In the same year, the year in which he succeeded his father, he was embroiled in a serious dispute with his step-brothers and sisters regarding the tithe sheaves of the lands of Merchiston. As the time approached for lifting the sheaves, both parties gave out that they meant to arm their respective friends and do open battle for their possession. Their intention came to the knowledge of the Privy Council, which appointed a neutral person to store the disputed sheaves in the barnyard of Wright's Houses, and forbade the contending parties 'under pain of rebellion,' to touch them till the dispute was legally settled.

Napier died on April 4, 1617—apparently of gout, with which he had long been afflicted. His will, which was drawn up four days before his death, concludes with these words: 'With my hand at the pen led by the notaries underwritten, in respect I do not write for myself for my present infirmity and sickness.' The place of his burial is uncertain, but it was probably in the old church of the parish of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh.

Napier's mathematical works must be left for specialists to deal with, but something may be said here of his book entitled *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John*, which, indeed, forms an essential part of his biography. In that book we come into closer touch with the

man than in any other of his productions that are preserved. It is, in point of fact, a profession of his own faith regarding the temporal and eternal interests of man, set forth with all the power and fervour of which he was capable. We have seen how the train of thought which led up to it was originally prompted. The preaching of Christopher Goodman and his conversations with his Roman Catholic friend at St. Andrews determined him, he tells us, to devote himself henceforth to the study of 'that holy book,' the Revelation of St. John. After long and futile meditation on the mysteries of the book, an illuminative light dawned upon him, and he began to set down his interpretation in Latin. But the menace to Protestantism on the part of Rome, so alarmingly brought home by the Spanish Armada and kept alive by the temporising policy of James, convinced him that the time had come when it was his public duty to bear his testimony. 'I was constrained of compassion,' he wrote in his address to the 'Godly and Christian Reader,' 'leaving the Latine, to haste out in English this present Work, almost unripe, that hereby the simple of this Island may be instructed, the godly confirmed, and the proud and foolish expectations of the wicked beaten down.'

The problem which Napier set himself to solve, and which, as we know, similarly exercised the genius of Newton, had a double attraction for him : it interested him as being naturally of a devout mind, and it interested him as a problem in the science of numbers. Both for him and for Newton the Bible was a verbally inspired volume given by God for man's salvation. Was it to be thought, therefore, that its interpretation was not permissible and possible to the mind of man ? 'To what effect,' Napier asks, 'were the Prophecies of Daniel and of the Revelation given to the Church of God, and so many dates of years and circumstances of time foreshewing the latter day contained thereintill, if God had appointed the same never to be known or understood before that day come ?'

The book is made up of two parts, the first consisting of thirty-six propositions, to each of which a proof is added, and the second of notes and commentaries on each verse in the Book of Revelation. The most momentous conclusion reached is that the Pope is Antichrist. The announcement of this fact is, indeed, declared to be the prime object of prophecy. The 'whole work of Revelation,' the author says, 'concerneth most the discovery of the Antichristian and Papisticall Kingdome.' Another conclusion he draws from his interpretation is the exact date of the end of the world. 'The last trumpet and vial,' he avers, 'beginneth anno Christi 1541 and should end anno Christi 1786.' 'Not,' he adds, 'that I mean that that age, or yet the world, shall continue so long, because it is said that, for the Elect's sake, the time shall be shortened; but, I mean that, if the world were to endure, that seventh age should continue until the year of Christ 1786.' He finally concludes 'that the day of God's judgment appears to fall betwixt the years of Christ 1688 and 1700.'

Such is the general character of the book which Napier certainly thought was of more importance to the world than his invention of logarithms. And the world at the time shared his opinion. Few books have commanded such general attention as the *Plaine Discovery*. Between 1593, the date of its publication, and 1645, five editions in English appeared; between 1600 and 1607 three in Dutch; between 1602 and 1607 nine in French; and between 1611 and 1627 four in German.¹

From the foregoing sketch it will have appeared that materials do not exist for a connected narrative of Napier's life. In Napier's day it was not customary to give to the world a two-volume biography of every distinguished man immediately after his decease. He was fortunate, indeed, if some

¹ These numbers are taken from W. Rae Macdonald's edition of *The Construction of the Wonderful Canon of Logarithms* (Edinburgh and London, 1889).

friend found occasion to write a brief outline of his career, such, for example, as we have in the case of George Buchanan. Of Napier we have not even such an outline from the hand of a contemporary. The incidental references to him which are preserved do not enable us to determine what manner of man he was in those closer relations with his fellows which reveal temperament and character. We have no clear glimpse of him as son or husband or father, as a friend or as an enemy. Great men, it has been said, should be regarded on their great sides; and the great, the salient traits of Napier's character are sufficiently in evidence from what knowledge we have of him. His most notable achievement—his invention of logarithms—has given him a high and permanent position in the history of European culture, and to have attained such a position constitutes his indubitable claim to the remembrance of posterity. Genius is not always allied with an impressive personal character, but in Napier we find a breadth of humanity, a passionate interest in the welfare of his fellow-men which claim our regard apart from the special gifts that were allotted to him. No mere cloistral student, he threw himself with all his powers into the life of his time, and fearlessly, by word and deed, bore his testimony to the truth which he held to be of the highest concern for his countrymen and for the world at large. If we cannot now accept Hume's appreciation and regard Napier as the greatest man whom his country has produced, his name is at least one of the most distinguished in her annals, and in celebrating his memory she is only discharging a debt to one who is among her chiefest glories.¹

¹ As a specimen of the dignified eloquence with which Napier wrote, we quote the concluding sentences of the address to the 'Godly and Christian Reader' prefixed to the *Plaine Discovery*.

'But forasmuch as this our good intention and godly purpose doth always proceed of a very tender and fraile vessell, and that, as all liquors (how precious soever) doth take some taste of their vessells, so this holy work may in some things (though not espied by myself) taste of my imperfections. Therefore humbly I submit these imperfections whatsoever to the gentle correction of every wise and discreet person, who in the motion of God's spirit judgeth

uprightly, without envy or partiality, praying all good men to have me pardoned of whatsoever is amisse. For, although I have not done herein perfectly as I would, yet zealously as I could, knowing that the poor widow's mite was acceptable to the Lord ; for every man hath not gold, silver, silks, and purple to offer to the work of the Sanctuary ; to me (as with Jerome) it should be much if I may purchase wool, or flocks to offer to that holy work. And, surely, this that I have, how small soever it be, till God enlarge me more, I offer it gladly unto the glory of God, and education of his true Church. To god, therefore, the disposer of this and all other godly works and meditations, who liveth and reigneth eternally in Trinity and Unity, be glory, praise, laud and thanks for ever and ever. Amen.'



